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GERMANY MISJUDGED





# GERMANY MISJUDGED

AN APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL GOOD  
WILL IN THE INTEREST OF A  
LASTING PEACE

BY  
ROLAND HUGINS

CHICAGO      LONDON  
THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.

1916

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1916

Printed in the United States of America

TO THOSE AMERICANS AND ENGLISHMEN  
WHO HAVE HEEDED KIPLING WHERE  
KIPLING HAS NOT HEEDED HIMSELF:

“IF YOU CAN KEEP YOUR HEAD WHEN ALL ABOUT YOU  
ARE LOSING THEIRS AND BLAMING IT ON YOU—”

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



## FOREWORD

THERE are persons who look upon the term "pro-German" as an epithet of reproach. Though not one of these, I insist that the term does not accurately characterize this book. The book is pro-American. It is written from the American point of view, and with American interests in mind. Personally I am not much worried for the Germans, because, for one thing, I am convinced that they are entirely able to take care of themselves. But I am much concerned for the future of America.

I have tried to analyze the international situation from the facts as I see them. I have written with both a fear and a hope: a fear that the United States, the one great nation that so far has stood aloof, might lose its head and join the carnage; a hope that America, at some future time, might contribute effectively to the upbuilding of a permanent peace for the world. To my mind the United States can make no bigger blunder, no graver historical mistake, than to abandon its position of neutrality. I contend that it has no business in this war, no matter whether the Teutonic Powers win or lose. The plunge into war is like a jump into a whirlpool; it is easy enough to get in, but there is no calm second thought, and escape can be

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purchased only by a terrific drain on vitality. America sober, would not make war; but America drunk with anti-German prejudice, might take the plunge. To add, in some small way, to that sobriety of judgment that would make us pause before we leap, is one of the chief purposes of the book.

That America will be able to do anything constructive for world peace seems to me questionable. For at present the vision of America is clouded. It is not anti-war, except in a vague, sentimental way; it is anti-German. It identifies "militarism" with a single nation. It does not see that militarism in Germany (and I do not deny its existence there) can never be wiped out by the pressure of rival militarisms. Guilt, apparently, is never satisfactory until it is personal. Americans in general have felt revulsion and horror at this war, and they have shown a disposition to fix the guilt on somebody, some definite set of human beings,—not a system—*not an historical process*—but a visible and punishable criminal. And they have made the German people, or the German Junkers, the criminal. But this is not thinking, it is malice. G. Lowes Dickinson has observed: "I believe that this war . . . is a calamity to civilization unequaled, unexampled, perhaps irremediable; and that the only good that can come out of it would be a clearer comprehension by ordinary men and women of how wars are brought about, and a determination on their part to put a stop to them." America will never contribute effectively to the cause of world peace until it sets

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about to examine critically the underlying causes of modern war. Such an examination can be made only when the purposes and needs of each nation, including Germany, are approached in a friendly spirit.

I belong, I think, to that class of Americans whose voice so far has been little heard. For I am one of those whose sympathy with Germany rests on rational rather than on emotional grounds. This is a presumptuous claim, perhaps, but one I can make fairly. I have no German blood—and incidentally, no Irish. I have never been in Germany, and I have no ties with the Fatherland. I am an American who has been here, so to speak, for a long time,—since about 1690. As I view them, these considerations are not important. We are all Americans together, each equally entitled to his opinion. But there are so many haughty patriots haranguing the country who seek to monopolize “truly American” spokesmanship, that I must declare my right to speak as an American, unhyphenated.

The four main chapters of the book are reprinted from *The Open Court* for November and December, 1915, and for January and April, 1916. The introductory chapter, “The Myth of a Demon Enemy,” is reprinted from the *New York Times* of July 11, 1915, and is reproduced here because it expresses in succinct form the spirit in which the whole is conceived. Three of the chief chapters are put in the form of open letters to Germany, England and France, the three great nations involved that may be said to be

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representative of Western civilization. The final chapter treats directly of America. In reality, however, the entire book is written to and for Americans,—and quite as much for those whose sympathies are pro-Ally as those whose sympathies are with the Central Powers. Some portions of the discussion deal with aspects of opinion and governmental action pertinent at the time of writing, but the bulk of it treats of the more fundamental reactions of America to the world war.

I have tried not to be betrayed by heat of controversy into censorious language. I take it this is not a time for Americans to indulge in venomous accusations, however bad tempers may be in Europe. For after all, half the world is bleeding to death and the heart of humanity is breaking. When one stops to think of this war, not in abstractions, but in particulars—what it means in individual human values, he puts aside rancor, even though (as he thinks) he combats untruth.

R. H.

Ithaca, N. Y.

February 1, 1916.



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## THE MYTH OF A DEMON ENEMY

ONE of the peculiarly depressing aspects of modern war is the degradation of the non-combatant mind. The civilian population goes blind with intolerance and mad with hate. In war we credit any impossible virtue in ourselves and any degree of wickedness in our foe. We swallow with eager gullibility every tale, plausible or grotesque, of his cruelty, his bestiality, his mendacity, his stupidity. The enemy becomes the scapegoat of the universe, and we load him with every conceivable attribute of evil until he looms in our eyes a monster of inhuman fiendishness. We picture him as the potential destroyer of everything worthy—of liberty, of art, of democracy, even of civilization itself. We do our narrow-minded best to belittle his achievements in science, literature and government. We are the good white knight, but he is the seven-headed dragon that God and justice has called us to destroy.

“War,” said an ancient philosopher, “makes men mild.” But this is true only of those who do the actual fighting. In the trenches, we know, the German is respected, and even regarded with a half-bantering affection. The soldier speaks generously of his foe, whose bravery and suffering he sees and appreciates.

The soldier, moreover, understands the nature of warfare, and does not cite the harshness of military operations—which he himself, in whatever army, must practice of necessity—as a proof of the enemy’s personal depravity. The civilian does precisely that. Out of hearing of the guns the humility and reasonableness which this game of life and death imposes have no counterpart. The millions of non-combatants, pricked daily by poisoned pens, join in an orgy of vilification, brandish lies about the enemy, chant their hymns of hate, and curse when they pretend to pray. It is even probable that a non-militarist democracy runs into this moral vitiation more easily than a military autocracy. For where great armies must be raised by volunteering, abuse of the adversary is elevated to a public duty. The spirit of the people must be aroused, it is said; we must be worked up and kept up to the fighting pitch, or rather to the recruiting pitch, by fair means or foul. The press takes on an inflammatory and scurrilous tone. A premium is put upon Billingsgate. To speak a fair and kindly word for the enemy is considered traitorous, and to degrade the nation into a mob is looked upon as a patriotic service.

Of course the better men and women of every nation will resist this popular delirium. It is one of the proofs of England’s greatness that there has been a constant stream of protests in her papers and journals against the slander-mongers. The cheap journalist and the penny-a-liner mixes his ink with gall, but the cultivated Englishman speaks with moderation.

It ought to be possible for a democracy to make war with dignity. Battles cannot be won by insults, and mud is not even an effective weapon of defense; but it is easy to befoul our own hands and minds. A high moral tone is a nation's first duty to itself, and it can be won only by a vigilant self-control. Neither a just cause nor victory will in itself prevent a spiritual rout.

There are certain obvious and human facts about Germany that we should keep in mind, both now and hereafter. Germany is not a Force, a Power, a Historical Tendency, or a Beast, but only a number of Germans, speaking a different language, but fundamentally like any other collection of men, women and children. They are now, and have been in the past, a great people, who command our respect in peace for their industrial and intellectual exertions, and in war for their valor and their power. Furthermore, they are convinced, like each of the other nations at war, that they are right in this conflict. In that cause they pour out their blood like water; and they are suffering as few peoples have suffered. Germany, within her rims of flame, is a nation in bandages and black; by day her land rings with the clangor of arms and shouts of defiance, but at night God hears there but one sound, the sobbing of women. Agony and death mean the same thing to a Teuton as to any other mortal, and heartbreak is just as hard to bear.

Deeper and more lasting than any struggles of race, or pride, or national advantage are the human verities. Unless we hold to these we shall lose our soul, though

we win a world. The true note of sane sympathy and understanding has been struck by an English writer not widely known in this country, A. Clutton-Brock, who contributes to the literary supplement of the *London Times*. Permit me to quote one or two of his admirable paragraphs:

“We know that we are not what the Germans think us, whatever our sins may be. We know that England is not an abstraction, cold and greedy and treacherous, but a country of people whose virtues we love and whose vices we extenuate because they are our own. But Germany—she seems to us now to speak with one voice as if she were an abstraction, and that voice says always the same venomous things against the abstract England of her evil dream. But she is not an abstraction any more than England is. She, too, is a country of men and women who love their own virtues and extenuate their own faults; and they also hear of the evil things which England says of them, and think that England is pouring out a hatred long nursed and attempting a destruction long planned. What an ugly word ‘Germany’ sounds to us now; yet to them it is a music which sets them marching, and they will suffer and die for it, as we for England. Every man has dignity who is ready to die for a cause, whether it be good or bad, for men will not die for causes that do not seem right to them; and the Germans, we know, are ready to die in herds and droves, as we put it, for Germany. And yet each German to himself remains a single human being, with his indi-

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vidual hopes and fears, with a wife and children praying for him at home, with an immortal soul that imposes this hard discipline upon his flesh.

“These hosts are not inhuman, whatever evil design has ranged them against us, but men like ourselves to whom we also seem inhuman hosts; and if some voice from heaven could suddenly speak the truth to us the weapons would drop from our hands and we would laugh in each other’s faces until we wept to think of all the dead that could not share the truth with us, and the wounded who could not be cured by it, and the widows and orphans to whom it could not give back their husbands and fathers. For the truth, the ultimate truth, behind all arguments and national conflicts and all the pride of victory and the shame of defeat, is that we are men in whom the spirit is stronger than the flesh, in whom the spirit desires love more than the flesh desires hatred. We have a strange way of showing that now; but whatever our own delusions, each nation knows that it is fighting the delusions of the other; and against them it is necessary for us to fight as against the hallucinated fury of a madman. Yet the fighting is best done as good soldiers do it who know that their enemies are men, not devils, and who fear them the less because they do not hate.”

## AN EXPLANATION TO GERMANY

THE United States, my German friends, has maintained relations of amity and good-will with your country for a century and more; and it is to be hoped that this historic friendship will continue undiminished through the world war. At the very outbreak of hostilities, however, menacing undercurrents of unpleasantness were set in motion, and they have grown steadily in volume and strength. As soon as you became definitely aware that sentiment here was running against you, you were amazed; and that amazement gave way after a time to irritation. You could not understand, you said, how this republic should have been misled by British sophistry. Later you learned that our bankers were loaning millions to your enemies, and that our manufacturers were doing a stupendous business in supplying the Allies with explosives and other munitions of war. Then your irritation changed to bitterness and your papers, with Teutonic candor, did not attempt to conceal their resentment towards Germany's "invisible enemy."

There has been a similar growth of antagonistic feeling in America. The bulk of our press took an unfriendly attitude toward you as early as August 1, 1914. Your invasion of Belgium and the subsequent



military measures which you employed there greatly intensified the hostility of some sections of American opinion. The current ran against you from that time on. There were intervals, it is true, when your cause here appeared to be gaining ground, particularly during the brilliant championship of Dr. Dernburg. But the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine caused anti-German feeling to flame out afresh. The official relations of the two nations are now strained; and they may be worse before they are better.

To say that this situation is distressing to many of us in America is to put the matter mildly. The mutual misunderstandings will not easily be cleared away. May I attempt to explain to you why Americans—the majority, that is—have sided against you? It will be hard for you to understand the true reasons. The obvious and usual explanations do not suffice. It was not because your cable was cut, for news from Berlin and Vienna reaches us regularly by wireless. It is not because the German point of view is unknown. We have had no censorship in this country, and you no lack of able defenders. Since the beginning of the war German-Americans have protested vehemently against the prevailing antagonism, and our magazines and newspapers have published many telling arguments from pro-German pens. It is not because Americans dislike Germany and things German. Before the war there may have been prejudice in some quarters against Germany; but there was also prejudice against England and against Russia. If German

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achievements in art, science and government are now belittled, it is because a recent partisanship has chilled the admiration rightly due you as a great people.

No, the blindness and intolerance now so conspicuous are not the causes of our bias, but rather its symptoms. You will entirely fail to understand the attitude of the typical American of intelligence unless you see that he thinks himself fair and just. He admits to no prejudice; he scoffs at the idea that he is the victim of English lies or sophistry; he believes he has arrived at a reasoned judgment after an impartial examination of the evidence. I think the American errs, but I know that he errs in good faith. He has rendered a decision against you because in his mind certain large charges have been proved against you. These charges may be grouped under the four following heads:

First, that you, the people of Germany, or your military caste, started this war, and made Europe a shambles in an attempt to dominate world politics.

Second, that your invasion and devastation of Belgium was a legal and moral crime which nothing can excuse or to appreciable degree palliate.

Third, that you make war with ruthlessness and brutality, and disregard in the pursuit of your military ends the rules of international law and the dictates of humanity.

Fourth, that your victory would be detrimental to civilization, leading to a militaristic domination which would ultimately threaten the peace of all democratic countries, including the United States.

## AN EXPLANATION TO GERMANY

These accusations undoubtedly seem to you exaggerated, absurd, grossly unjust. So they are, considered from any viewpoint which includes knowledge of and sympathy for the German people. But let me assure you that they are held in all seriousness by thousands and thousands of Americans who are quite above the charge of either stupidity or hypocrisy. Their attitude results from a peculiar logic and their previous point of view.

### II

Americans, you should understand, were surprised at this war. Yourselves, like Russians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, who have been living for two decades under the shadow of a possible European conflict, saw in the outbreak of hostilities the clash of deep historical forces. But Americans were literally bowled over with astonishment. They had been listening to the soothing assurances of pacifists, and the insincere professions of statesmen, until they were hypnotized into believing that a world war was "impossible." And when the war did come they hit upon the most obvious explanation: that some nation had conspired in its own interest to upset the sacred *status quo*. America immediately set herself up as judge to determine who was "guilty," and straightway fixed the blame on you.

Germany was selected as the culprit because the surface case was against you. You had backed up Austria-Hungary in an attack on the small nation Servia. You had sent out twenty-four-hour ultima-

tums and made the formal declarations of war on both Russia and France. You had drawn in England by violating the neutrality of a little country England had pledged to support. And so the surface case was complete; and this is precisely the case which your enemies rigged up against you in their White, Orange, Yellow, Gray and Blue Books. America accepted the indictment at almost face value.

Does it seem preposterous that so simple, so naive a view of European politics could seriously be entertained? Does it appear ridiculous to you that the significance of events should be judged by their sequence in time rather than by their causal connections, or that the incidents of a brief crisis should be given more weight than all the antecedent issues out of which the crisis arose? Well, such is the mind of average America. You must remember that we stand outside of the whirl of world politics, and are not accustomed to penetrate the shams of cabinets and the intrigues of diplomats. In particular the editors who control our newspapers and magazines, and who to some extent do "mold" public opinion, are usually without a sound European perspective, and often display, in their quick but cocksure judgments of affairs outside our borders, a schoolboy naïveté and a provincial gullibility. They think of states as persons, who act on single and sentimental motives.

But that is not all. America is not entirely made up of half-educated journalists and people who follow their opinions. Men of culture and travel, who take

a more sophisticated view of international affairs, have joined in your condemnation. They, too, hold you "guilty." And this, I think, traces to one cause: a failure to understand the true nature and policy of Russia. The "bear that walks like a man" has been quite shouldered out of sight by England. You as Germans realize that the controversy which led directly up to the war was a Russo-German quarrel.<sup>1</sup> You comprehend the politics of the Balkans, where bribery, assassination, and savage "exterminations" serve in lieu of diplomacy. You know that it was Russia's unyielding mobilization on two frontiers which precipitated the present struggle. But Americans do not sense these things. From the beginning of the war Russia has been systematically and shamelessly white-washed. We are being fed with talk about Russia's liberalization at the very time when the Russian government is throwing labor leaders into prison, exiling her Liberals to Siberia, instituting new pogroms against the Jews, and proceeding with a relentless Russification of Finland. We are constantly invited to admire "the soul of the Slav" as exemplified in Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Turgenieff, as though the intellectuals of Russia were not a small class among one hundred and seventy millions which suffers a living martyrdom in revolt against the dominant and inhuman autocracy. What G. Lowes Dickinson recently said to Englishmen might be addressed with even more force to Americans: "Since there has been in Russia a class

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<sup>1</sup>Brailsford, H. N., *The Origins of the Great War*.

of thinkers and of writers that class has given all its energy to destroy the power and discredit the ideas of the Russian government. Persecuted with a horror of persecution of which Englishmen can form but the palest image (for such experiences lie outside our ken), exiled, imprisoned, tortured, by hundreds and by thousands, they have never ceased to protest, in season and out of season, against the whole conception of the state which animates the soulless bureaucracy of Russia."

And so the American, forgetting Russia, and with his eyes on Germany, France, Belgium and England, declares you the aggressor. May I presume to give you my personal view of the burden of responsibility? In one sense, the ultimate sense, I cannot exempt you from all blame. Your government has, like all the governments of Europe, been concerning itself with the balance of power, and with imperialistic projects. It has demanded a voice in world affairs, its place in the sun. The creation of a great army, and especially the building of a big navy, were not wholly unconnected with these ambitions. In this you were merely part of the European system, for the world today is a militarist world. You were no deeper in it than England, which spent far more money on its military and naval equipment, nor France, which had a greater proportion of its population under arms. If you were better prepared it was only on account of certain qualities in your character, of thoroughness, of punctuality, of scientific versatility, of genius for organization,

which are just as conspicuous in the arts of peace as of war. Each of the chancellories of Europe plotted for selfish national advantages—advantages which had very little real significance for the masses in any country—and bent its chief efforts to forming alliances which would shift the balance of power in its favor. To that system of rival alliances must be ascribed this collapse of civilization; for fundamentally the conflict on its negative side is a war of mutual fears, and on its positive side a war of imperial ambitions. Thereby the system stands forever condemned, as must any system which causes the slaughter of hundreds of thousands, and brings heartbreak to a million homes. The war itself is the great tragedy. The wreck of any national ambitions is a paltry calamity by the side of it, and the fulfillment of no national hopes can compensate for it.

But once granting the fundamental truth that the world of today is a militaristic world, the part you Germans have played in it has been a notably inoffensive and honorable one. You have kept the peace for forty years, while every other great nation went to war. You have seen England and France each add, by military aggression or threat of it, four million square miles of colonial territory to their possessions, while you added one million,—mostly worthless land. You saw your legitimate projects for expansion balked again and again by English and French diplomacy, in Africa, in Asia, in the Balkans. You watched the growing menace of Russia, as, financed by French and

British gold, she increased her military resources, built strategic railroads, and marshalled her half-barbarous millions. And when Russia threw down the challenge you accepted it. You were fighting for yourselves a preventative war, and for your ally Austria-Hungary a defensive war.

Your statesmen were entirely honest when they said in the German White Paper :

“Had the Servians been allowed, with the help of Russia and France, to endanger the integrity of the neighboring monarchy much longer, the consequence must have been the gradual disruption of Austria, and the subjection of the whole Slav world to the Russian scepter, with the result that the position of the German race in central Europe would have become untenable.”

You knew that the Pan-Slav movement, engineered from St. Petersburg, menaced Austria directly and yourself indirectly. What nonsense then to say that Russia entered the war out of sympathy for her little Slav brothers, the Serbs! Russia had recently watched the humiliation of her little Slav brothers, the Bulgars, with composure, and even with satisfaction. For Bulgaria had broken loose from Russian influence, but the Servians were Russian tools. Further—and here is a point ignored in most of the “histories” written by Englishmen and Americans—Austria under pressure from your government modified her demands on Servia before she mobilized on August 1. She conceded the only point on which Russia, even from an imperialistic standpoint, could be interested, the territorial integrity



and sovereignty of Servia. But Russia, certain of the co-operation of France, and confident of the support of Great Britain, moved from first to last for war. She was the first of the powers to mobilize. She persisted in that mobilization despite your warning that it could be interpreted in only one way. It was then that you saw parley was futile; you sent your ultimatums, and mobilized to meet the double menace.

There are Americans who, by some freak of reasoning, declare that France was "attacked" by you—France, who had lent herself body and soul to the designs of the Russian autocracy! France, whose answer to your inquiry about her position was to call up her reserves! No nation, however confident of its strength, would prefer to fight Russia and France together rather than Russia alone. You know who made the "attack."

### III

The invasion of Belgium is considered in this country the strongest count in the indictment against you; nothing carries such conviction of German perfidy to the mind of the American as your treatment of a pledge to respect her neutrality as a "scrap of paper;" and many go about declaring that America disgraced herself among the nations by not officially protesting against this act of unrighteousness. For myself, this hue and cry over Belgium seems one of the least sensible aspects of American discussion. I cannot but admire the bold words of the German Chancellor in the Reichstag:

“Gentlemen, we are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps are already on Belgian soil. Gentlemen, that is contrary to the dictates of international law. . . . The wrong—I speak openly—that we are committing we will endeavor to make good as soon as our military goal has been reached. Anybody who is threatened as we are threatened, and is fighting for his possessions, has only one thought—how he is to hack his way through.”

That statement is one of the few sincere utterances heard from any European statesman since the war began. It rings true. You were terribly threatened; you had to strike through Belgium or court ruin. Any nation in your predicament would have done the same thing. G. Bernard Shaw put the matter squarely before Americans early in the war, when he told them: “I think, for example, that if Russia made a descent on your continent under circumstances which made it essential to the maintenance of your national freedom that you should move an army through Canada, you would ask our leave to do so and take it by force if we did not grant it to you. I may reasonably suspect, even if all our statesmen raise a shriek of denial, that we should take a similar liberty under similar circumstances in the teeth of all the scraps of paper in our Foreign Office dustbin.”

That is the true British view, not the sniveling cant over the sanctity of treaties. A recent English historian<sup>2</sup> asked, in speaking of the seizure of the Danish

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<sup>2</sup>H. W. V. Temperley, *Life of Canning*, 1905.

fleet at Copenhagen in 1807, "Would it have been any satisfaction, if we had sunk under the pressure from Bonaparte, to have died with our eyes fixed on Puffendorf and the law of nations?"

You can see, however, why the plea of self-preservation carries little weight here. The American throws aside the whole argument from necessity, to you so conclusive, because, as I have explained, he believes you the aggressor. He regards the invasion of Belgium as a dastardly detail in a sinister campaign to conquer the world. Furthermore, England has made all the capital possible out of your breach of law. England's declaration of war followed your violation of Belgian neutrality, and she alleged that as her cause for entry. It was a lucky stroke for the cabal of politicians that controlled Britain, for they had committed the naval and military forces of the Empire to France in secret agreements while they had openly denied these arrangements in the House of Commons. They needed an excuse before the country, and Belgium furnished it to them. Sir Edward Grey and his faction did not stage-manage England's negotiations for their influence on neutral opinion, but for their influence on British public opinion and the recruiting campaign. Nevertheless it had its effect here. Curiously enough there exists in England a strong group of protest which is not for a moment taken in by the miserable sham of Grey, Churchill and the rest that this is a "war to preserve international law" or a "war to end war" or anything else on Britain's part but a

war of imperialistic jealousy from top to bottom. But America, sentimental, credulous, self-righteous, in the face of the facts, in the face of England's record, believes that England is fighting for the rights of small nations.

It is not reasonable to take tragically the violation of Belgium's neutrality because there was very little neutrality there to violate. She had practically allied herself with France and England. To enter into secret military agreements with two of the guarantors of her neutrality, ostensibly for "defense" but actually to the detriment of a third guarantor, was not playing the game fairly. Roland G. Usher, a writer who has attained prominence in this country by his discussions of European affairs, wrote in the *New Republic*, November 28, 1914:

"The vital difficulty in this question of neutrality was and is that the territory of Belgium was not and is not neutral ground. It is literally the front door to France and the side door to Germany, and its possession by either is so dangerous to the other that the moment war breaks out or even becomes probable, Belgium is either a part of Germany or a part of France, and hostile territory for whichever of the two does not hold it. . . . Whatever the diplomatic facts may be, whatever the technicalities of alliances and treaties eventually prove to have been, Belgium was as clearly an ally of France as England was. The Belgian army and its dispositions, the Belgian forts on the German frontier, were prepared with the advice,

at least, of English and French generals. Plans for the co-operation of the three armies were undoubtedly made. Let us not quibble over the question whether this was an infringement of neutrality. The Belgians knew—let us say it once more—that the neutrality of Belgium was a fiction because Belgium was not neutral ground.”

Quite so. Belgium was not neutral because she had thrown her sympathies to the French, and because she had connived with your recognized enemies for the employment of her military forces. You had a reasonable suspicion that she would not view a French violation of her neutrality in the same light as a German violation. Few Americans realize what the strategic situation was. They conceive of Belgium merely as an easy road to France, and the sole purpose of your invasion to strike a swift blow at France in order to be able later to turn and deal with Russia. But there was a more vital matter involved. Belgium borders on the most vulnerable portion of Germany, the great industrial district of Westphalia, which includes among other vital centers Essen and the Krupp gun works. Essen, though east of the Rhine, is less than one hundred and fifty miles from Antwerp. Cologne, Düsseldorf and Krefeld are nearer. The empire would be prostrate once this prosperous and thickly populated region of factories, blast furnaces and steel mills fell into hostile hands. It is an open secret that the English military leaders had planned in a war with you to blockade your ports by sea and enter Westphalia by

land, and so hold Germany by the throat. As a road to Paris Belgium was an advantage to you; as a gate to Essen it was a warrant of death. Through Belgium you could strike France a blow in the face, but through Belgium France could stab you in the back. That was the nature of the military necessity.

You suspected, with reason, Belgium's good faith. The documents found in the archives of the Belgian general staff in Antwerp merely confirmed in part facts already thoroughly well known to your military authorities. But why, asks the American, didn't Germany wait to see if France or England intended to violate Belgian neutrality? That is the whole point. You couldn't wait. In our Southwest when a man reaches for his gun we do not expect the other disputant to see what use will be made of the gun before he draws his own. He acts on a presumption. Men who refuse to act on that sort of presumption soon have heirs reading their wills. You could not take the chance of having Belgium used as a weapon to crush you.

The destruction which hit Belgium, it is true, was a terrible penalty for her dereliction, or that of her military rulers. We live in a world where, either for the nation or the individual, the punishment rarely fits the crime. When men play with fire they may be frightfully burnt; and war is the only fire that compares with hell. The apologists and mourners for Belgium usually contend that she was justified in seeking covert aid against the German menace, which

proved to be real. But she would have had a thousand times better chance to escape disaster had she practised a real neutrality and not one interpreted to fit her supposed interests. When history makes its final reckoning, I am sure, Belgium will not be found the "black indelible blot" on your name which your enemies would place there. At least you have the satisfaction of knowing that you went about the business like men, openly and frankly, without the subterfuge and hypocrisy practised by the other nations concerned.

IV

Barbarians! Huns!

From the beginning of the war your foes have carried on against you a campaign of atrocity tales as unscrupulous and mendacious as that conducted by the Greeks against the Bulgars in the Second Balkan War. The Belgians issued an official report of alleged German barbarities, and the French and English followed suit. Viscount Bryce, well and favorably known on this side of the Atlantic, lent his name to the English version. These canards are widely believed in America, but chiefly, I think, by those who wilfully want to believe—those whose prejudice blinds them to impartial evidence. Responsible American newspaper correspondents, returned from the front where they had every opportunity to investigate, have exposed the fraud again and again. Your own official document on the conduct of war by the Belgians more than exonerates you for the reprisal measures you took. But these were not "atrocities" as advertised.

Of course no one will assert that the sweep of your armies through Belgium and France was accomplished without occasional instances of pillage, rape and murder. Such sporadic lapses into crime are to be expected in war time. Business is business, says the American; in a far truer sense, war is war. We have reason to believe, however, that the iron discipline of the Prussian armies, unequalled anywhere else, reduces the number of these offenses to a minimum. The stories that seep through from France—of the bayoneting of prisoners, for example, and of German girls shrieking to be killed—make us skeptical of the effectiveness of the restraints in the other armies. And what will turn the stomach of civilization when the final inquest is held are the barbarities of the Russian hordes. You know that in East Prussia the atrocities of the Cossacks in 1812, 1813 and 1814 are still recalled, a century later. And you know what a saturnalia of outrage, cruelty and torture Russian troops perpetrated last year in Bukowina, Galicia and East Prussia. The official German report of the Russian horrors has been tacitly ignored, although the reports of the "atrocities" in Belgium have been given the widest possible publicity.

There has grown up, in fact, a legend that the Teuton in warfare is brutal, savage and ruthless. This legend has been carefully fostered in England—again to aid the recruiting campaign; and it has gained wide-spread credence in the United States. What has lent color to the legend more than anything else is the occasional



slaughter of civilians and non-combatants,—as in the dropping of Zeppelin bombs on London and other English towns, the bombardment of the east coast of England by a German fleet, and the sinking of passenger vessels by submarines. You look upon the killing of these non-combatants as the regrettable concomitants of legitimate military projects, but a mind hostile in opinion to you finds in them proof of your personal turpitude. In the fog of war we arrive at a curious mental state. What seems justifiable when done by our side appears intolerable and execrable when practised by the enemy. Thus American sympathizers with the Allies wax hot when German airmen shell open English towns, but watch with composure when the aviators of the Allies drop bombs and kill women and children in the unfortified German towns of Freiburg, Schlettstadt or Karlsruhe. When the French use asphyxiating gas they hear the news with grim satisfaction, but when you use gas they raise a howl of indignation. When you shell a cathedral tower they quote the Hague Conventions, but when the English use dum-dum bullets they shrug their shoulders. Sympathy with a belligerent hardens the heart. To your ill-wishers in America German heartbreak and German agony mean nothing, and German deaths are a cause for rejoicing.

This is the reason why America has not shown resentment at the cynical inhumanity of England and France in pitting against you uncivilized yellow, brown and negroid troops. In the name of civilization and

the higher culture they have launched on your sons and husbands the Turco, the Sikh, the Ghoorka, the Pathan,—these savages who cut off the heads of prisoners, make necklaces of eyes they have gouged from the wounded, and thrust their knives upward through the bowels. “From Senegambia, Morocco, the Soudan, Afghanistan, every wild band of robber clans, come fighting men to slay the compatriots of Kant, Hegel, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Beethoven, Wagner, Mozart, Dürer, Helmholtz, Hertz, Haeckel, and a million others, perhaps obscurer, no less noble, men of the fatherland of music, of philosophy, of science, and of medicine, the land where education is a reality and not a farce, the land of Luther and Melanchthon, the land whose life-blood washed out the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Dark Ages.

“The Huns!”

v

Quite frankly the American press wants to see you beaten in this war, to have “Prussian militarism” wiped out. If you win, say our sage students of foreign affairs, you will override the world like a tyrannical colossus, threatening the life of every free people. France and England will be annihilated. Who will be next? Naturally the United States. As our sapient editors are fond of phrasing it, the United States “cannot afford” to see the Allies lose.

The desire to see you defeated springs naturally out of the general feeling of antagonism. Some explana-

tion of your supposed aggression had to be found. How was it that you, notoriously a peace-loving people, suddenly reached up and pulled down the pillars of civilization? What was the motive? The answer has been militarism—together with autocracy, lust for expansion, delusion of a world mission—but always first and last, militarism. Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardt have been pictured as your popular authors and national guides. The Prussian drill sergeant has been depicted as your universal educator, who has drilled your minds as well as your bodies. The House of Hohenzollern has been held up as a dynasty of war-lords, afflicted with a Cæsarian itch to rule the world.

In other words, your defamers do their best to make of you a bogey. The non-combatant in modern war loses all touch with fact and comes to paint the enemy as a monster and a demon. No greater libel ever has been uttered against a nation than when Germans are accused of being a race of militarists. A juster description is that you are the most military and the least warlike of people. You had in Germany, of course, as had every other European power, your pro-war party, and it was an insistent and outspoken party, but to picture it as anything but a small minority is to travesty the truth. Your militarists had no more popular support or more effective grip on the government than did the Imperialists of England, or the Chauvinists of France, or the Irridentists of Italy; the proof lies in the event!

If you had not maintained a powerful army, where

would you be now? Here is Germany, completely ringed with hate-stung foes, battling against odds such as no other nation ever has had to face, outnumbered more than two to one—almost three to one—in men, resources and wealth, fighting to preserve her existence and even her right to remain a free and united people; yet to hear Englishmen and Americans talk one would imagine that the Allies, rather than Germany, were the stag at bay! Of late it has become the fashion in our journals to cite your “preparedness” as a convincing proof of a German conspiracy against the peace of the world. I quote a few phrases from a bitter and rhetorical article<sup>3</sup> in a recent issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*: “Germany . . . has hurled calamity on a continent. She has struck to pieces a Europe whose very unpreparedness answers her ridiculous falsehood that she was attacked first;” “Prussia’s long-prepared and malignant assault . . . the deadliest assault ever made on Democracy;” “Her spring at the throat of an unsuspecting, unprepared world.” There you have it! Germany was prepared to meet a dangerous attack (which actually was made), therefore she must have invited the attack, nay, perpetrated it. And such nonsense passes for logic! At the war’s beginning your American enemies predicted that you soon would be crushed and taught the folly of challenging a forewarned world; now that you are winning, your victories are cited to show how innocent must have been the rest of the world so to have been caught

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<sup>3</sup>“The Pentecost of Calamity” by Owen Wister.

napping. Either way you are blamed. When you stand off a world and deal your enemies staggering blows, you are given no credit for being better generalled, for having superior physical stamina, for meeting with greater ability the complex industrial and technical problems of modern war, or for your intenser moral earnestness,—this passion of conviction which enables you to unlock such marvelous reserves of energy.

No, the explanation is always "preparedness." Yet in all save the intangible racial factors your opponents were as well prepared as yourselves. The combined standing armies of Russia and France before the war numbered 2,010,000 soldiers as against your 870,000, and the total of their drilled men was 9,500,000 as against your 5,500,000. Austria and Turkey were more than offset by Great Britain, Servia, Portugal, Italy and Japan. On the sea the preparedness of the Allies exceeded yours in the proportion of four to one. The total output of their arms works and munitions factories was greater than yours in the same ratio as their armies, and Schneider-Creusot rivaled Krupp. The boasts of your enemies last summer, telling what they would do to you, shows how highly they thought of their armaments. Is it your reproach or theirs that those boasts proved somewhat hollow? Why not rather give you decent credit for the amazing, almost incredible, stand you are making?

The overworked assertion that civilization will suffer if you win is not based on any impartial analysis of

## GERMANY MISJUDGED

German character or purposes, or upon a reasoned forecast of historical probabilities. It is sheer malice. Probably there is no settlement of this conflict which can be entirely satisfactory. For myself I prefer to see you win, and win decisively. If Germany is destroyed, or even greatly hampered in its normal development, one of the world's best hopes will be extinguished. But if Germany is victorious, the international situation may be much improved. The world will be spared an increase in Russia's power, and the forcible Russification of more victim peoples. We shall avoid a dangerous aggrandizement in the position of Japan. A German victory may liberalize the electoral system of Prussia,<sup>4</sup> but nothing will liberalize Russia except a crushing defeat and the withdrawal of English and French loans to the bureaucracy. France will not be annihilated, any more than she was after 1870, though she may be forced to part with a section of her colonial empire. England will not be wiped out, but she may be forced to forego the arrogant assumption that the sea is British property. The United States can view with composure any changes in titles to colonies in Africa or the Near East. You will never cross our path. For one thing you will be too busy elsewhere!

Most Americans, of course, do not share this view; nothing would please them better than to see Germany brought to her knees. It is this popular desire to see

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<sup>4</sup>Professor Henry C. Emery, "German Economics and the War," *Yale Review*, January, 1915.

you beaten which so complicates the question of our trade in war munitions. That question has not and cannot be argued on its merits. However neutral the United States has been in its official attitude, it is not neutral in sentiment. Americans are glad to supply your enemies with arms, because in this way they can help avenge the "rape of Belgium" and aid in punishing the "disturber of the world's peace." Technically, of course, our neutrality is not violated, for we have the legal right, by historical usage and by article 7, Convention XIII of the 1907 Hague Conference, to sell arms anywhere in the world. Neither, on the other hand, would our neutrality be violated by placing a complete embargo on the ships carrying munitions. To right-thinking men and women this whole business of dealing in instruments of destruction for profit appears disgusting and abhorrent. However, the crux of the question is neither neutrality or ethics. While the Allies control the seas export of arms aids them, embargo on arms aids you. Consequently outside of German-Americans, there is little demand that Congress suppress this new and monstrous billion-dollar industry.

My German friends, there is one last word I would address to you, and this most earnestly of all. Do not allow your bitterness against the United States to increase. Do not regard this country as your confirmed enemy, but as a potential friend. Our nation is much more divided in its sympathy than it appears to be. There are over eight million German-Americans in

America,—immigrants or offspring of immigrants. There are nearly three millions from Austria-Hungary. There are four and a half millions from Ireland, of whom a large proportion take a pro-German attitude. Besides these millions there are a vast number of men and women of older American stock who see the justice of your struggle, or at least are lenient in their judgment. The laboring men, the common people everywhere, do not share the rabid intolerance of our pseudo-intellectuals. The anti-German attitude of our press gives a false surface of unanimity to American opinion. We do not know, as a matter of fact, where we should stand if your side had adequate and fair representation in the journals of public discussion. But be assured of this: what is now called "the American attitude" toward Germany will not endure forever. It is, as I have explained to you, based in large part on errors in the interpretation of facts. If that is so, some day these misinterpretations will be refuted and swept away. At bottom America is fair-minded. And you have in the United States loyal friends, whose eyes refuse to be blinded by calumny, who, not unaware of your faults, love you for your lofty virtues, who will fight for you against a world of falsehoods, until the truth prevails. *Dem glücklichen Tag!*



## A QUESTION FOR ENGLAND

**W**HY are you in this war?

You are the English; you are now, and will continue to be, a great people. You are at present united, with the exception of a few ineffective intellectuals, in a resolve to "crush" Germany, to beat her to her knees, to punish her. Hate, when it permeates a whole people, becomes a terrible political fact. Yet there is no reason why neutrals should sanction and condone British hate any more than German hate, or Mohammedan hate. Hate always blights, never creates, and should hate rule the peace and the settlement, whichever side wins in the field, we shall have a worse Europe than before. It is not, therefore, to your half-crazed wartime mood that I appeal, but to whatever measure of cool reason remains among you. In every crisis a few Englishmen keep their heads; that is one of the sources of British strength. Let me ask them, without rancor, one question.

What are you fighting for?

You may say that the answer is simple: you are fighting for democracy, for liberty, for civilization, for humanity. Permit me to point out that these vague phrases in themselves mean exactly nothing. Each of the belligerents believes it is fighting for "civilization."

The idealism of the German people is as sincere, and their earnestness as intense, to say the least, as your own. High-sounding pretensions must be translated into concrete terms to gain significance.

An explanation would come from you in good grace, for on the face of it your position in the war is peculiar. You are fighting on the side of Russia, a despotic and half-Asiatic power which has little in common with Western civilization, and whose interests are in no way identical with those of the British Empire, and you are fighting against Germany, a people of the same stock as yourselves, with the same general social purposes, whom the deeper racial and cultural forces would seem to mark as your natural ally. Indeed, your choice of sides in this struggle is a great historical anomaly, second only to the anomaly of the war itself. How did that alignment come about? Of course there are reasons. But are the reasons those which have been alleged by your statesmen and publicists? Behind this question lies another: What are you striving to accomplish in this conflict? What purposes do you hope to achieve by that victory of which you are still so confident?

This is not an academic discussion. These are political questions of the greatest urgency, both for Englishmen and, indirectly, for citizens of the United States. It is of the first importance that we think rightly on these issues, not merely that we may save our own souls by finding the truth, but that, having embraced the truth, we may save Europe and the world.

Are you fighting for Belgium?

You must admit that for many of the British public Belgium was England's *casus belli*. Hundreds of thousands of your best young men have enlisted in the service of the King, believing that they are taking up arms to defend a little country against a brutal aggression. From your press and platform have come the strongest assertions that England is fighting a righteous war to vindicate the sanctity of treaties and uphold the rights of small nations. No consideration has won you sympathy in neutral countries more readily than this plea.

Do you still insist on the pose of the knightly rescuer? Let me call your attention to two or three incontrovertible aspects of your relation to Belgium.

1. Sir Edward Grey had, in secret commitments, unconditionally pledged the naval and military forces of the Empire to France in case of a European war. These secret agreements, contracted as far back as 1906 and frequently renewed, known to only a few members of the Cabinet, were not announced to Parliament and the British nation until August 3, 1914, when the armies of the Continent were already on the march. They would have thrown you into war in any case, Belgium or no Belgium. It is said on good authority that Sir Edward Grey planned, in event of repudiation by his own Cabinet, to form a Coalition Cabinet in August, 1914—as was done months later—and proceed to carry out his “obligations of honor.” That these

agreements were contracted in secret, without the knowledge of the British people, does not alter the fact that they were a binding action of the British government.

2. Germany made a definite bid for your neutrality on the score of Belgian integrity. If your government had been actuated by any idealistic concern for small nationalities why did it not intervene to preserve Belgium when it could? Sir Edward Grey was asked point blank by Ambassador Lichnowsky whether he would keep Britain out of the war if Belgian neutrality were respected (celebrated dispatch No. 123, British White Paper). Your Foreign Secretary answered, no, his hands must be free,—meaning, of course, that his hands already were tied. When war came, Great Britain's action was mortgaged. "If France became involved we should be drawn in" (No. 111). England might have, indeed would have, saved Belgium had Belgian welfare been a primary object of British statesmanship; but it was not.

3. Belgium was used shamelessly as a pawn in the great game between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. Your little neighbor, by the accident of its position, is of the greatest strategic importance, either for an offensive against France or an offensive against Germany. Your Foreign Office urged the Belgians to "maintain to the utmost of their power their neutrality" (White Paper No. 115). France pressed armed aid on Belgium before its course was announced. British and French strategists for years had been

hatching secret military plans with the Belgian General Staff. These plans did not, it is true, foreshadow direct aggression on Belgium, but surely they indicated the most cynical willingness to use the Belgian army as a first line of defense for the Entente. When war broke out the "plucky Belgians" rendered you a most valuable service in delaying the march of the Teutonic hosts. What, I ask you in all frankness, did you do for Belgium? Belgium was desolated; she was caught and ground to pieces between the huge rival alliances of Europe. The action of your government, playing the game of the balance of power, amounted to nothing less than a ghastly betrayal of Belgian interests.

The above observations, I submit, are based on facts; I do not admit that they are disputable. I give them thus briefly because they have been emphasized already by many British writers. I need mention only the names of Dr. F. C. Conybeare,<sup>1</sup> E. D. Morel,<sup>2</sup> H. N. Brailsford,<sup>3</sup> Ramsay Macdonald,<sup>4</sup> and Bernard Shaw,<sup>5</sup> Even the *London Times*, in a leader of March 12, 1915, repudiated chivalry for Belgium: "Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg is quite right. Even had Germany not invaded Belgium, honor and interest would have united us with France."

Yet I know what reply you, the better class of Englishmen, would give to the foregoing. You would

<sup>1</sup>Conybeare, letter in *Vital Issue*.

<sup>2</sup>Morel, Letter to Birkenhead Liberal Association.

<sup>3</sup>Brailsford, *Belgium and "The Scrap of Paper."*

<sup>4</sup>Macdonald, Statement in the *Labor Leader*.

<sup>5</sup>Shaw, *Common Sense About the War*.

say: "This indictment of the past is all very well. I dare say our statesmen juggled with Belgium, and I have never been a partisan of secret diplomacy. That is no reason why we should forsake Belgium now. The bald fact remains that she has been trampled under foot by Germany, that she is now invaded and held in subjection. It is England's duty to fight on until the last invader is cleared from Belgian soil."

I give you full credit for honesty in this sentiment. Your aim is generous; but you have chosen futile means. You wish to avenge Belgium by force of arms. It cannot be done.

Suppose you are successful; that you drive back the Germans, yard by yard, to their own territory. What does that mean for Belgium? Merely a second devastation more terrible than the first. By again making Belgium the world's battlefield, you will scorch her bare. There is a better way out. Why should Germany care to retain Belgian territory? Only as a weapon against *you*. "Antwerp is a pistol pointed at the heart of England." Strategically Belgium has value; politically and financially she would be a liability. As soon as you convince the Germans that England is not perpetrating a huge aggression to destroy her, Belgium will be evacuated without cost to the Belgians; not before. I agree that no settlement of this conflict can be satisfactory which does not restore Belgium's independence and make her such measure of reparation as may be possible. But in that reparation you have a share to pay as well as Germany.

## A QUESTION FOR ENGLAND

Let us, in the name of decency, drop this twaddle about the rights of small nationalities. Consider your allies. You stood calmly aside when Russia throttled Finland, and when she crushed Persian independence with atrocities more gruesome than the alleged German atrocities. You applauded Japan in violating China's neutrality to march on Kiao Chou. Your Foreign Office actively supported France when she tore up the public law of Europe as embodied in the Act of Algeciras and subjected Morocco to military terrorism and financial strangulation. Do you insist on one moral code for your enemies and approve an opposite for your friends? Your own record in Ireland should close your lips against pious platitudes about small nations. You did not enter this war to protect Belgium. You will never render her effective service until you are prepared to bargain concessions or colonies to secure her interests. That, apparently, you are not ready to do.

What are you fighting for? Not Belgium!

### III

Possibly you are in this war to safeguard France. *La Belle France!* You could not bear to see your closest friend crushed to earth. If that is your motive it is a laudable one. The whole world holds France precious.

You will admit, however, that this deep affection is rather a sudden attachment. For centuries the French and British peoples fought and snarled at one another.

You hated France when France was strong. Even within the last quarter century there were three occasions when you stood on the brink of war with her,—over Siam, West Africa, and the Nile Valley (Fashoda). But in 1904 your Foreign Office reached a general agreement with France on all outstanding disputes. In 1906 it came to an understanding with Russia, and so the *Entente Cordiale* was formed. From that day on the peace of Europe was never safe. While the Triple Alliance was the most powerful military force in Europe the dogs were chained, but when a stronger combination (presumably) arose, the politics of Europe steadily underwent a sinister transformation. Let us see what happened.

The British Foreign Office definitely abandoned Salisbury's policy of a Concert for a system of rival military groups. The Entente did not confine itself to a defensive league against a possible attack, but began openly or clandestinely to balk and bully and injure its rivals in time of peace. Sir Edward Grey at once signed a general Anglo-French declaration regarding Egypt and Morocco, in which the French government averred that it had no intention "of altering the political status of Morocco." This was followed by the publication of a Franco-Spanish declaration of similar tenor. At the same time that these public declarations of good faith appeared Sir Edward Grey entered into *secret* agreements with France and Spain which provided for the partition of Morocco between the two latter countries and rendered the integrity of



the Moorish kingdom a sham.<sup>6</sup> Germany had vast economic interests in Morocco. What became of them? They were wrested from her. Germany was robbed, underhandedly, and furthermore was humiliated, insulted, slapped in the face. Morocco, whose independence was guaranteed not only by the public declarations of 1904, but also by the international Act of Algeciras of 1906, signed by all the powers, was ruthlessly reduced to a French dependency. Morocco in time of "peace" was treated worse than Belgium in time of war.

To all this Germany did not submit without a protest. She intervened twice, once at Tangier in the person of the Emperor, and again at Agadir with the Panther. In these interventions she was entirely within her rights, and in accord with what Mr. Morel calls "the fundamental legality of her attitude." And both times Europe nearly plunged into war because Britain interfered to back up France in an aggression where she was morally and legally wrong. In both instances, mind you, your Foreign Office did not interfere with merely diplomatic weapons, but with the threat of the whole military and naval forces of Great

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<sup>6</sup>The Moroccan intrigue served more than anything else to embitter Anglo-German relations, and helped to usher in the present war. The authority for the statements in the text is to be found in *Morocco in Diplomacy* by E. D. Morel, first published in London in 1912, and reissued as *Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy* in 1915. Mr. Morel presents the history of the affair with such a wealth of detailed proof, with such evident impartiality and with so genuine a concern for the best interests of England and of Europe that I venture to state no fair-minded man can read the book unconvinced.

Britain,—offered, in the event of a Franco-German rupture, to mobilize the fleet, seize the Kiel canal and land 100,000 men in Schleswig-Holstein. These facts were laid bare in the Lausanne disclosures of 1905 and the Faber revelations of 1911. One immediate effect was to leave the whole German nation rocking and seething with indignation, and to convince Germany that England would precipitate a European war on the first pretext.

In the end Germany lost all of her interests in Morocco, though a slice of land in the interior of the French Congo was thrown to her as a sop. The secret clauses of the 1904 Declarations finally were revealed in *Le Temps* and *Le Matin*, November, 1911. But Germany had wind of them as early as October, 1904. Says Mr. Morel (remember that he wrote in 1912): "Thenceforth dated the situation which for more than seven years has poisoned the whole European atmosphere, embroiled British, French, German, and Spanish relations, and placed an enormous and constantly growing burden of added expenditure upon the peoples of those countries. Thenceforth dated the situation which Sir Edward Grey, instead of seeking to improve by orienting his policy after Algeciras in a more friendly spirit toward Germany—retaining what was good but rejecting what was bad in the policy of his predecessor—has aggravated and worsened to such a degree that only yesterday we escaped a general conflagration. Veritably the process of being a party to the stealing of another man's land brings with it its own Nemesis.

Unfortunately it is the people in whose name, but without whose sanction, these things are done, who have to pay." And again: "I understand that in the current jargon of diplomacy that sort of thing is called 'high politics.' The plain man may be permitted to dub it by one word only—dishonesty."

Yes, it was dishonest diplomacy, just as it was dishonest statesmanship in 1914 to deny in the House of Commons that the country was pledged to France, and then to reveal, after war actually had broken out, secret obligations of honor. England's naval and military power has been mortgaged to France in case of a war with Germany for the last ten years, unconditionally, and without reference, apparently, to the nature of the quarrel and the crisis. It was so in 1905, it was so in 1911, and it was so in August, 1914. The British Foreign Office had become saturated with anti-German feeling, with suspicion and unfairness. This anti-German cabal, typified by such men as Tyrrell, Nicholson and Bertie, did all it could to stultify international good-will, and, through the press, to prejudice and embitter public opinion. Sir Edward Grey worked hand and glove with this cabal, although his anti-Germanism seems to have been diluted with a pale pacifism which made him shudder, at the last moment, on the edge of that catastrophe he had done so much to make inevitable. The culpability of Britain is no less because these machinations were carried on behind the scenes and without the overt sanction of the British people. In foreign affairs the

Foreign Office was Britain. And when the great test came it was able to carry the country into war.

For France, then, are you fighting? For the France of gaiety, of beauty, of philosophy? What did your diplomatic intriguers care for the ideal France? They were playing a high and baleful game, the game of the Balance of Power, in which Germany was to be outmatched, the game of the ring-fence. England's creation of the Entente, or rather the way she manipulated her influence after it was accomplished, had an evil influence on the politics of both her allies. In Russia the loans of British gold strengthened a weakening bureaucracy; the decline of the Duma dates from that sinister aid.<sup>7</sup> In France it caused the fires of *La Revanche* to burn brighter. It gave political power to the French Colonial Party and threw the republic into the hands of adventurers. It thwarted every movement toward a Franco-German *rapprochement*, inspiring, for example, those influences which brought about the overthrow of Caillaux. Was ever game more stupid, or in the end more disastrous? As it was diplomacy without honesty, so it was statesmanship without enlightenment. What price Britain pays we already begin to see. It served directly and needlessly to undermine what is one of the greatest interests of true statesmanship, the peace of the world.

And mark you! This France to which you so effectively allied yourself was bound by the strongest

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<sup>7</sup>See *Persia, Finland, and our Russian Alliance*, pamphlet of the Independent Labor Party.

of agreements to Russia. Her war policy was part and parcel of Russia's policy. Why is France now at war? Is it because she was wantonly invaded by Germany, or because she is fulfilling her pledges to Russia? Let there be no mistake in this matter. France came into the struggle automatically as Russia's ally. Though there was some silly pose at the beginning—what Americans would call "a grandstand play"—about withdrawing ten kilometers behind the frontier, there never was any doubt as to France's action. "France is resolved to fulfil all the obligations of her alliance."<sup>8</sup> Yet this quarrel was at first a Russian affair. It was a dispute over the Balkans between Servia and Russia on one side and Austria and Germany on the other. Let me quote another Englishman. G. Lowes Dickinson says:<sup>9</sup> "So far as Russia is concerned, I believe Germany to be on the defensive." Well, if that is so, then Germany is on the defensive against the world. The nations had strung themselves on a single cord, the handle to which was the Franco-Russian alliance. When Russia jerked that handle, the nations were all pulled in,—France, Great Britain, Belgium. France was a link; you are really the ally of Russia.

To be the ally of unregenerate, medieval Russia is a national infamy. But you cannot see that.

The attitude of cultivated Englishmen toward Rus-

<sup>8</sup>Statement of Viviani to the French ambassadors at St. Petersburg and London, July 30, 1914. French Yellow Book, No. 101.

<sup>9</sup>*The War and the Way Out*, p. 16.

sia illustrates how the partisanship of war warps the mind. At one time you understood the real Russia and dreaded and abhorred that reign of the secret police called its government. But an ally can do no wrong. So far as possible Englishmen now mentally turn their backs on Russia, and whenever they are forced to look at her they put on rose-colored spectacles lest they see the truth. Arnold Bennett, in one of the most unsportsmanlike defenses<sup>10</sup> of British diplomacy which has been published, declares that so far as England is concerned, Russia is an accident. An accident! An accident composed of 170,000,000 people which increases at the rate of 3,000,000 a year, with all those millions conscripted and marshalled by the most soulless, oppressive, unscrupulous autocracy in the world! For the Germans this vast Tatar nation is no accident. "We in the West, as Marcel Sembat pointed out some months before he entered the French Cabinet, have never quite realized how Germans regard Russia. For us she is a safely distant power. We can afford to think of her novels and her music. We can personify her as a nation which produced Tolstoy and Kropotkin.<sup>11</sup> We know her through her exiles. For the Germans she is the semi-barbarous neighbor across the frontier, with the population which is eighty per cent illiterate, and those Cossacks whose name still recalls the devastations of the Seven Years War."<sup>12</sup> Yet the

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<sup>10</sup>*Liberty*.

<sup>11</sup>Kropotkin by all means. See his *The Terror in Russia*, 1909.

<sup>12</sup>H. N. Brailsford in *The New Republic*, July 24, 1915.

truth about Russia is not hard to ascertain. Since the war started all the forces of reaction have been strengthened. The labor leaders, every liberal element, have been terrorized; the Jews, already ground under heel, have been subjected to new and horrible indignities; all constitutional rights in Finland have been stamped out. The Duma has been prorogued and silenced. Russia uses the support of her liberal allies to slump further back into despotism. This war is the great catastrophe; it overshadows all else. But the next greatest crime against civilization is the fact that the three greatest cultural nations of the West, England, Germany and France, instead of standing shoulder to shoulder against the Asiatic powers, are tearing at each other's vitals, with two of the three arrayed against the third at the behest and in the interest of this unspeakable bureaucracy. Who is responsible for this irrational, this unholy alliance? I leave the answer to you.

IV

"But away with all this talk of policies and politics," you cry. "Let us get down to the fundamental issue, Germany herself. Why are we at war? Look at our foe for your answer! We could not abide a world forever overawed by this menace of Prussianism! These barbarians! These veritable Huns! This modern Attila! This perverted nation of militarists! This incarnate blood-lust and egotism! This—"

Save your vocabulary. We have heard more than

enough of vituperation within the past year. I know that you, the better class of Englishmen—and that is the only sort I am addressing—have had no part in the shameless and cowardly abuse of Germans which has filled your press during the war period. Still it is true, I believe, that your conception of Germany is compounded in part of fictions. How could it be otherwise? For a decade certain sections of British opinion have made it their interest to slander and misrepresent your great Teutonic neighbor. Within the last months these defamers have used their blackest colors; they do not picture a people at all, but a grotesque caricature of something which started out to be superhuman and ended in being inhuman. Out of the fog of war they have fashioned a bogey, a monster which bears no more resemblance to the Germany across the North Sea than does an image of Moloch to a man. All Englishmen appear to share, in greater or less degree, this bogey-belief.

To refute each canard, to strip bare and expose each fiction, would be impossible. But some categorical statements should be made. Germans are *not* inhuman brutes, delighting in atrocities; in the conduct of this war they have shown themselves no more cruel and brutal than the French, and far less so than the Russians and your brown and black native troops. The Teuton is *not* by nature bestial, bloodthirsty, or merciless any more than is the Briton or any other civilized European, and he yields to the evil passions of war no more readily. Germanic civilization is *not* inferior to



French or English or Italian civilization, though different; on the contrary it might well be maintained that the only nation which has abolished poverty, the one whose educational system is the best in the world, whose municipal governments are models, which outstrips all nations in scientific and industrial energy, shows distinct elements of superiority. The Germans are *not* mad with military ambition, nor bent on any career of world conquest, determined to impose the German language and German institutions on unwilling peoples. They asked for a place in the sun. But a place in the sun is not the whole earth.

Come, let us be reasonable. In plain justice you must admire the Germans, even though you do not love them. If Anglo-Saxon civilization is musk in your nostrils, Teutonic civilization cannot be stench. In the arts of peace the Germans challenge emulation. In war they are the astonishment of all history. No other people could have withstood so overwhelming a coalition. Not only in a military and technical manner are they proving their strength, but in a moral and intellectual way too. In England you have an oppressive censorship; and you have lost for the time being many of your constitutional rights. In Germany the censorship confines itself to its proper duty of suppressing military information; there the most unfriendly news is published, including the daily British and French war bulletins; in any German city one may read the current English and French newspapers, and buy the books and pamphlets written to expose

German guilt. Is it so with you? Or in Russia or France? Does this mean anything except that the German people, alone among the belligerents, are allowed freely to face the truth? And there are Englishmen who still speak of this as the Kaiser's war, or a Junkers' war!

For the Germans this is a people's war, in the fullest sense of the term. The great spiritual fact of the struggle is this flaming, unbroken conviction of the German people that they are right. Though your statesmen may have been successful with Russia, France and Italy, they have done very badly with Germany. They have not left a single German, high or low, with the smallest doubt that Britain engineered a conspiracy to destroy its rival. The explanation is simple. The Germans look to history, remote and recent. Englishmen work themselves into a great consternation over what Prussian militarism is *going* to do; and they try to frighten neutrals with pen-pictures of its future depredations. But Germans point to the actual performances of Prussian militarism, and contrast them with the concrete performances of British imperialism.

They point out, for example, that this terrible menace of Prussianism, to which you impute such evil designs, has kept the peace in Europe since 1870; that it never seized a favorable opportunity to precipitate war, and neglected to attack Russia when crippled by Japan, France during the Dreyfus affair, England when the Boers disclosed her weakness. They recall

that the German government, in the face of a hostile press at home, sacrificed German interests in Morocco in order to avoid a European conflagration. And they ask, has British imperialism ever refrained from aggression when its "interests" were involved? England has formed coalitions successively against Spain, Holland and France; she has swept from the sea every fleet which dared to rival her own. Her recent attitude toward Germany has been of a piece with this historic policy; the efforts of her statesmen have aimed consistently at the enfeeblement and the isolation of Germany.

One of the British prophets of this war was Professor Cramb. In his book he wrote: "'France,' said Bismarck in September, 1870, 'must be paralyzed; for she will never forgive us our victories.' And in the same spirit Treitschke avers: England will never forgive us our strength. And not without justice he delineates English policy throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as aimed consistently at the repression of Prussia."

What are you fighting for?

Here is your answer. The repression of Prussia! Since Germany became a power, and particularly since she began to build a navy, she aroused increasing dislike and distrust amongst you. In 1897 the *Saturday Review* announced the slogan *Germaniam esse delendam*, and that program has been steadily backed by a powerful element of British opinion. Your statesmen have pursued the old, unimaginative politics of

annoyances and curbs; they have done their utmost to balk every German attempt at expansion in Africa or in Asia, and sometimes their interference has been nothing short of wantonly malicious, as in the instances of Morocco and of the Bagdad Railway. Militarism in Germany? Of course there is militarism there, and some of its aspects are not bright. But why not? British policy for a decade and more has done all in its power to create a military temper in Germany, to throw her into the hands of the war party, and to lash into being that tigerish ferocity with which she now fights you. Commercial jealousy and irritation in manufacturing circles, blended with imperialistic voracity and certain calculations (or miscalculations) of high politics, have led Great Britain into an anti-German policy and an anti-German war.

You will resent this answer to our question. To declare that England is fighting, not for Belgium, not for France, not for the sanctity of treaties or human rights, but merely for selfish imperialistic reasons, and rather ill-conceived reasons at that, strikes you, I am sure, as grossly distorted. When you look into your own souls you find no such sordid motives. You find only an intense love of England and of England's honor, and a sense of British quality and worth. I know how you feel and I know that the things you cherish are realities. But these noble realities, I submit, have very little to do with the beginning of this war, or its end.

And you could see this too, were you able, even for

one brief hour, to throw yourselves into complete sympathy with your opponents, and look at the world through their eyes. Had you attempted any such sympathetic understanding of Germany two years ago, this war, I am convinced, never would have happened. You would have seen that the very future existence of Germany depends on her overseas markets, and that she must be able to guard these at all costs. As it is, you have been applying one logic to Germany and another to England. You have looked upon the German navy as an impertinence and a threat, even though the growth of the German navy has been accompanied by a constant demand for the freedom of the seas (i. e., the abolition of the capture of private property at sea). But you have never been able to see that the British navy, nearly twice as large, is a threat (to Germany and possibly to others) especially when accompanied by a stubborn and effective refusal to have the seas neutralized. You could denounce colonial greed in Germany, and stand ready to fight her if she acquired an African colony, or a naval base in the Atlantic; but British expansion, though unlimited, seemed justified, no matter at whose expense; and you could applaud when Bonar Law announced in July, 1915, that the Entente Allies had torn from the Teutons 450,000 square miles of colonial possessions. What is meat for you, you declare to be poison for Germany. You tried, in your supremacy, to enforce a dictation on others to which you would not submit for a moment. The worst you can properly say of Germany is that

she challenged that supremacy, and that she may yet force you to treat her as an equal.

The vital question remains: What of the future? The past is past; it must bury its dead. To fix the blame, to point the accusing finger, to try to anticipate the condemnation of history, is in itself a fruitless task. After all, the stupidest people in the world are they who—on whichever side—wish to “punish” some one for this war,—this ultimate calamity in which each belligerent shares a portion of the guilt. What strikes one in this gigantic struggle between the British and German nations is not so much its wickedness and its fierceness, as its needlessness, its utter irrationality. Germany is, as I said before, your natural ally; there are a thousand valid reasons for friendship to one valid reason for hostility. Is it too late to hope for a reconciliation between these two great peoples which are so alike in their virtues, however much they may differ in their faults? I think you begin to see what a task you have on your hands in seeking to humble a nation so strong and so indignant as Germany. However the war results, neither Germany nor England can be annihilated. And that is well, for there is room for both in the world. The highest ideal of international development is not a level uniformity, but many divergent cultures, each intensifying its own peculiar merits. Will it be impossible for the English to put their pride—even though it turn out to be a wounded pride—behind them, and make that great effort toward a sympathetic understanding of Ger-

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many which should have been made long ago? We may hope that the effort can be made, for in the final restoration of Anglo-German friendship lies one of the world's best hopes, and the strongest guarantee of future peace.

## FRANCE!

**T**HERE are times when we have to speak sharply to those we love best. The friends of France will remonstrate with her, and the sincerer their affection the plainer will be their speech.

For France is living in a dream, wrapped in illusion. Because she suffers much she thinks her cause is just, and because her soul is high she imagines her deed is good. Every nation at war tends to idealize its motives, and this is particularly true of this world-war,—possibly just for the reason that most of its causes were selfish. The nations enlist under the banners of truth and righteousness, of humanity and pity, of liberty and civilization. But the discerning everywhere see through the sham. In England there are people who call this sort of thing “tosh,” and in America there are many who call it “buncombe.” In most countries these grandiose sentiments are not taken with entire seriousness; but with you, apparently, yes. No motive is too altruistic or too noble for you to proclaim. You furnish the world an example of national self-deception.

The truth is often like a shower of ice-water. It is gratifying to vaunt the glory of France or to inveigh against the wickedness of the enemy; but it is not so



pleasant to talk of secret treaties, of Russian securities held by French investors, of the subjugation of Morocco, or of the intrigues of the Colonial party. Yet the one is ebullitions of the war spirit, while the other represents the realities of history. The French are a proud, a gifted, and a sensitive race. But does your pride exempt you from facing the facts? Why is it that you ignore or slur over aspects of this struggle which are so desperately clear to an outsider?

Any sane discussion of the part France is playing in the war must center about the Franco-Russian alliance. That is the cardinal fact. A quarrel breaks out between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The occasion is the murder of the Austrian heir, but the real dispute is the balance of power in the Balkans. To settle the supremacy of the Near East, Germany and Russia fly at one another's throats. But the West is dragged in, and the whole world flames up,—for what reason? Because France acts with Russia. France makes Russian interests, Russian designs, Russian ambitions, her own.

G. Lowes Dickinson calls this long-standing bargain of yours with the Terror in the North an "unholy alliance." But let that go for the moment. The motives which prompted France to champion Russia are a separate question. First of all let us agree on the simple fact that France's action was conditioned on that of her ally. There has been a notable lack of straightforwardness in discussing this point, and some of you have tried to delude yourselves into the notion

that you were wantonly attacked. At the beginning of the war, for example, your political and military leaders showed the greatest concern not to commit any act of "aggression." French troops were withdrawn ten kilometers behind the frontier. Was this ostrich-like act of innocence undertaken to impress the French populace, or to impress the outside world? Can you deny that France was already committed to fight for her northern ally? Was there anything at all which Germany could have done, or left undone, which would have kept you out?

On July 29, 1914, the Russian ambassador at Paris telegraphed to Sazonof: "Viviani has just confirmed to me the French government's firm determination to act in concert with Russia. This determination is upheld by all classes of society and by the political parties, including the Radical Socialists" (Russian Orange Book, No. 55). The same day Sazonof telegraphed back: "Please inform the French government . . . that we are sincerely grateful to them for the declaration which the French ambassador made me on their behalf, to the effect that we could count clearly upon the assistance of our ally, France. In the existing circumstances, that declaration is especially valuable to us" (Orange Book, No. 58).

These quotations are from a hundred possible. Every line in both the Russian Orange Book and the French Yellow Book confirms the allegiance of France to Russia. Every statesman in Europe knew what your attitude would be. The Germans understood it;

yet they pressed you for an open statement of your intentions. Your only answer was to mobilize the entire army and the fleet.

Viviani acted throughout in complete subservience to Russia. At the same time he acted with a remarkable absence of candor toward Germany. Let me illustrate. On July 31 he informed his ambassador at St. Petersburg that "Baron von Schoen [German ambassador at Paris] finally asked me, in the name of his government, what the attitude of France would be in case of a war between Germany and Russia. He told me that he would come for my reply tomorrow [Saturday] at 1 o'clock. *I have no intention of making any statement to him on this subject*, and I shall confine myself to telling him that France will have regard to her interests. The government of the Republic need not indeed give any account of her intentions except to her ally" (French Yellow Book, No. 117). On the following day, August 1, Viviani had the audacity to telegraph to his ambassadors abroad, "This attitude of breaking off diplomatic relations without direct dispute, and although he [i. e., Baron von Schoen] *has not received any definitely negative answer*, is characteristic of the determination of Germany to make war against France" (Yellow Book, No. 120). How, in the name of Janus, was Germany to receive "any definitely negative answer" if Viviani refused to "make any statement on this subject"? What would you call this sort of thing in ordinary affairs,—hypocrisy or deceit? This attempt to cloak

hostile designs with silence deceives no one; it was perfectly clear what French "intentions" were. You intended to strike Germany from the west, should she be at war with Russia in the east.

Let us not try to evade a patent truth. The historical fact, from which there is no escape, is that you were bound to go in if Russia went in. Perhaps your treaty made it obligatory on you to fight by the side of Russia; in any event there was no disposition on the part of your leaders to keep the sword sheathed. All that talk in the days of the crisis about patrols crossing the frontiers, about German troops firing on French outposts, and about French aeroplanes flying over German territory, does not touch the core of the situation. These allegations, from whichever side, are mere banalities and pose. The die was cast; it had been cast for years. Even if you impute the most sinister motives to Germany, even if you prove to your own satisfaction that she started on a career of world domination, you do not demonstrate that she wanted to make war on France in 1914. Whatever her motives, Germany would have preferred to deal with one enemy at a time, would she not? It would have been far better for her, you must acknowledge, to fight Russia alone, than to grapple at the same time with Russia, France, England, and all their allies.

For you, therefore, to declare that you suffered an unprovoked attack, and that you are now purely on the defensive, is to fall short of an honest avowal. Germany, it is true, sent you an ultimatum and put a

time-limit on your preparations; and at the end of that limit she invaded your territory. These, however, were acts necessary to her plan of strategy. She knew you were bent on fighting. Why should she not seize the initial advantage? If you persist in describing yourselves as being on the defensive it is merely because no nation ever admits that it is acting on the aggressive. Of this there is a striking example in French history. Napoleon Bonaparte toyed with the notion that he was merely defending himself. In Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon* the following conversation between the emperor and his minister Decrès is recorded. The conversation takes place immediately after Napoleon's marriage with Maria Louisa.

Napoleon—"The good citizens rejoice sincerely at my marriage, monsieur?"

Decrès—"Very much, Sire."

Napoleon—"I understand they think the lion will go to slumber, ha?"

Decrès—"To speak the truth, Sire, they entertain some hopes of that nature."

Napoleon—"They are mistaken: yet it is not the fault of the lion: slumber would be as agreeable to him as to others. But see you not that while I have the air of being the attacking party, I am, in fact, acting only on the defensive?"

There has been altogether too much use made of this phrase "on the defensive." If you, France, are on the defensive, it is only in that attenuated sense that a victory of Germany over Russia would have

tilted the balance of power in favor of Germany. But why were you interested in the balance of power? Why were you, the innocent and idealistic French, interested in wars and military combinations? The whole question, you see, simmers down to this: Why were you in alliance with Russia?

Surely it was not on account of sympathy with the Russian government. There were never two more oddly assorted yoke-mates than republican, intellectual France, and autocratic, illiterate Russia. Whatever way you look at it, Russia is the most backward power of Europe, industrially, educationally and politically. A great deal of nonsense has been published in France lately, the purpose of which is to eulogize the Russians and to paint in bright colors the drab reality. Attention has been called to Russian art, music, literature. But this is simply to magnify the exceptional. Every one admits that Muscovite culture has produced a few rare flowers, just as every one admits that potentially the Russian civilization has admirable aspects, realizable after it has emerged from medievalism. The typical Russia of today, however, is not a few revolutionists, nor a handful of intellectuals excoriating their government. The typical Russia is the secret police, the superstitious millions, the military despotism, the Siberia of exile, the grave of a dozen nationalities, and the gehenna of the Jews. That is Russia as the whole world knows it, and no amount of sentiment or whitewash can hide the truth. The whole

world knows, too, that Russia changes, and can change, very slowly.

Yet into the arms of this cruel and unscrupulous bureaucracy France threw herself unreservedly. She formed with the Bear of the North a binding military alliance which has brought her, at the last, to the supreme ordeal and sacrifice she now undergoes. Her motive could not have been fear. A France pacific in aim, and unallied with great military powers, would have been no more the object of suspicion, or the victim of aggressive designs, than would Switzerland. Germany would not have molested a non-militarist France, for Germany had defeated France thoroughly, and extirpated French influence from her internal politics. There's the rub! Germany had defeated France in 1870-71. She had humbled France as she had never been humbled before. She had taken Alsace-Lorraine, borderland provinces, neither exactly French nor exactly German, as the visible badge of her triumph. Formerly these two provinces belonged to the German empire, and were taken in the midst of peaceful conditions without even a show of right. Lorraine became French, but Alsace remained German with the exception of a small district on the southern frontier.

France formed the alliance with Russia when stinging from the bitterness of that defeat of 1870—71. Russia afforded the hope of an ultimate revenge. Russia was courted, flattered, financed. French gold bought Russian securities in such quantities that the

whole of thrifty France came to have an economic interest in maintaining the political *mésalliance*.

Bismarck said that France would never forgive Germany her victories. Apparently he spoke the truth. France fights to restore Alsace-Lorraine. Yet is it because the inhabitants of that territory have been oppressed? You will complain that when your troops entered Alsace at the beginning of the war they were treated to poisoned wells and were shot in the back by the peasants. The Alsatians are among the bravest and most loyal of German soldiers,—these Alsatians you wanted to “liberate.” You fight to recover provinces which do not want to be recovered—for the final glory of France. *La Revanche!* Yet after all is not revenge a very human motive?

Yes, revenge is very human, but it can hardly serve as an excuse for dragging the West into a war over the Balkans, and for decimating the whole of Europe. Revenge is supposed to be more the attribute of the Red Indian than of the civilized modern. Why should France alone be incapable of forgetting a past defeat? Why should she cherish the spark of hatred for more than a generation, waiting the hour to blow it into flame? The alignment in this war shows how many hatreds, how many revenges, have been foregone. Russia fights by the side of England and Japan: she forgets Crimea and the Yalu. Germany and Austria, once enemies, are not merely allies, they are a single unit of military administration. Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance (although no one can recall the



fact without shame). Bulgaria linked with Turkey,—who would have thought it possible? You, France, you alone, pursued a policy of historic revenge. You alone found a wounded pride too sore for healing. For forty years the black ribbons of mourning fluttered from the statue of Strassburg. You have taken them off now,—to place them on a million graves.

But you did not want war, you are protesting. The mass of the French people were pacific. That must be admitted. But the mass of people in no country wanted war. The Germans did not want it; the English did not want it; the Russians knew nothing about it. Yet they all accepted it after it came; and now they give their lives gladly for their country. Oddly enough the very fact that the present war was made by governments rallies support to those governments, and enlists the loyalty of the peoples. You can see in your own nation how the paradox works. The French, you say, generally scorned war,—*C'est trop bête, la guerre*. Therefore when the war came they were convinced that it was not of their own making. It must be some one's fault. And whose but the enemy's? It must have been the vile Germans, the contemptible Boche, who brought this about. In war-time we completely forget the Biblical injunction about the beam in our own eye.

Yet after all the French people must be held responsible for the actions of their government. Possibly many of you did not realize where the alliance with Russia and the policy of colonial expansion would

ultimately lead you. You may have been hypnotized by the banner of *La Revanche* and the call of *La Gloire*. But you have a republican government; you are a democracy. There has been in France for a generation a strong war party. In the last decade or two, through all the kaleidoscopic changes of your politics, it has been apparent that this party of "aggressive patriotism" was gaining strength, gathering power. This effected the *entente* with England. It engineered the adventure in Algeria, and later managed the strangulation of Morocco. It maintained a strong financial interest in the blood-stained *concessionaire* system in the French and Belgian Congo. It constantly worked to embitter Anglo-German relations,—an effort ably abetted by the imperialist party in Britain. It undermined every attempt to achieve a reconciliation between France and Germany, and it brought about the ruin of Caillaux. In other words, the Colonial party, the Chauvinist party, was continuously successful in its designs. Although some of the most patriotic and far-sighted statesmen in France never ceased to combat it and the interests it represented, they were not able to break its grip. You had, indeed, a popular test of its power just previous to the outbreak of the war, in the elections on the Three Year Law. The Three Year Law was sustained. The militarists had won. The "New France," the France of aggressive temper, of nationalistic bombast, had been approved.

There was, I submit, a discernible downward trend

in the policies of the successive governments under the Third Republic, and to some extent a decay in French sentiment. There have been times when France stood for liberty, equality and fraternity, and was ready to make great sacrifices for unselfish ends. But the France which battles to recover Alsace-Lorraine and to enthrone the Russian Czar in Constantinople, has drifted a long way from the ideals of the Revolution; just as the England of Grey and Asquith is far different from the England of Cobden, Bright and Palmerston. Indeed this war could not have happened had there not been a distinct deterioration in the tone of European politics. All sentiment was squeezed out of international relations, and along with it most of the principle. One indication was the support given by the Liberal West to the Russian bureaucracy, at a time when that bureaucracy was menaced by Liberal revolt at home. Another proof was the cynical abandonment of the weaker nations and the colored races. Morocco, the Congo, Finland, Persia, the Balkans! These outrages never would have been tolerated by any European civilization that was not preoccupied with selfish and sinister plots and counterplots. Things are now at such a pass that you are able to laud in the most fulsome terms an Italy which bargains away its honor, enters upon a career of national piracy, and attacks its own allies in their hour of supreme peril. There has been a debacle in morals.

This "New France" is the worst France since the seventies, since the France of Paul Déroulède. You

have revived that old lust for military glory which France, through all her history, has never been able quite to uproot. That is the heart of the matter. It will not do to picture yourselves as the good white knight forced to buckle on armor to meet the "Prussian menace." The obvious historical facts disprove the assertion. There has never been for you a Prussian menace. In the last forty years you, a people with a rapidly falling birth-rate and not essentially commercial, entered on a policy of colonial expansion. Germany, with more right, did the same thing. But you succeeded in acquiring territory while she, relatively, failed. But has she ever balked you in your enterprises? Quite the contrary. The spurs of the French chanticleer proved sharper and more annoying than the beak of the German eagle. Remember Morocco! In all those forty years the Mailed Fist was not once lifted against you. It would not have struck now had you not challenged the very existence of Germany by the alliances with Russia and England. What a masterly stroke of statecraft it was, this placing of Germany in a military vise! Your leaders could not resist that temptation. They saw a France rejuvenated, reborn, triumphant! And the soul of the French rose to the vision.

Well, you have the glory already, though not the victory. No one of the Allies has made so splendid a showing of military prowess and vigor. But at what a cost in lives and human agony! No nation ever bought its laurels more dearly. And who can tell

## FRANCE

what sacrifices you may yet be called upon to make? How idle it is, after all, to reproach the French! You are intoxicated; the madness is in your blood. It is too late to turn back now; you must see this through to the bitter end. Yet the whole world grieves for you, because the whole world loves you. It loves you not for your ambitions or your bellicose moods, but for the wholesome sanity of your life in times of peace, for your gaiety and wit, because of your intellectual and artistic brilliance, because you are, in a word, the most Greek of modern nations. Americans especially hold you dear, for they have not forgotten those flashes of sympathy you have shown for the ideals which America, in a blundering way, is trying to realize. We see you now as the most pitiable figure in this world war, because you suffer so much and with the least need. Our sympathy is not less because you have, for the moment, turned your back on the great ideals of human progress. You are like a beautiful woman we have loved and who has betrayed our loyalty, and we look on you and think, how can you prove so false and be so fair. The fact that you suffer for your own sins as well as for the sins of others only makes the heartbreak heavier. Like France herself we bow our heads to mourn your irrevocable dead and unreturning brave.

## THE ATTITUDE OF AMERICA

**A**N able American historian predicted at the beginning of this war that the United States would be pro-German in its sympathies within four months. He gave two reasons. The first was that the American mind would puncture the lid of lies which European diplomats had clamped over the explosion in July, 1914, and would begin to understand the real position in which Germany found herself. You see he was a philosophical historian. His second reason was that the German-Americans would argue the rest of us around to their point of view.

It is superfluous to say that the historian was mistaken. Not four months, but four times four months, have passed, and the United States is far from pro-German. Our pro-Ally contingent, most conspicuous in Boston and New York, is as violent as ever, both in its opinions and the expression of them. There exists, indeed, a very active and powerful element which is working—covertly for the most part—to involve the United States in a war with the Central Powers. The German-Americans have not argued us around. If they started out with such intention they have failed. Their protestations may have had some effect, but they themselves have been ridiculed, scolded,

browbeaten, sneered at. To designate German-Americans, together with their friends the Irish-Americans and the Austrian-Americans, a new term of reproach has been invented, "hyphenates."

II

The German-Americans have been cruelly misrepresented. There is no sounder or more desirable element in our population than our Teutonic blood. There is no element which has displayed devotion to the country, or civic or private virtue, in greater degree. Yet in these months of war they have been forced into a most distressing position. They have daily read in the press the grossest insults to themselves and to the land of their ancestors. They constantly see the news poisoned by calumny and abuse. They live in a country which has declared its neutrality but which supplies in tremendous quantities the arms and ammunition to kill their kin, and they are powerless to hinder. When they have raised their voices in protest, their patriotism has been questioned. It is impossible to gauge the irritation, pain and humiliation they have suffered. Nevertheless it has sometimes struck me as odd that they have not made more headway against American prejudice. For they have been almost the sole champions of Germany's cause in America, and they have had a strong logical case to argue. And yet Americans, in the mass, have not been brought to see the validity of Germany's major contentions.

For one thing, German-Americans have not always been happy in their defense of Germany. They have

sometimes used phrases to the detriment of facts. For example, in seeking to combat American misconceptions, some of them have asserted that Germany is "democratic" and that Germans enjoy "personal liberty." Now, to speak plainly, neither of these statements is true except in a qualified measure. No government which maintains such rigid property qualifications on voting as does Prussia, and which gives such large powers to a hereditary ruler, is democratic in the Anglo-Saxon sense. People who live under such a multitude of police regulations as do the Germans have not personal liberty in the American sense. German civilization shows many lofty virtues which other peoples envy and have not attained; but it is different from ours. These things have nothing to do with the case anyway. It is not our business to tell the Germans, who are free, enlightened, educated, what sort of government they shall prefer, any more than it is our business to tell the Chinese whether they shall have a republic or a monarchy. Americans, after all, are not so provincial as to want every nation cut from the same pattern,—least of all their own pattern.

And also, there is Mr. Wilson!

German-Americans have been censured for attacking President Wilson's foreign policy. This, of course, is unjust. The very persons who objected when German-Americans criticised the President for going too far, are now belaboring the President for not going far enough! But have German-American criticisms always been well directed? What, precisely, is the



complaint they have to make against the administration's course?

In general, the accusation is this: that the United States has been more neutral in name than in fact; that our neutrality has been highly prejudicial to Germany and highly benevolent to the Allies. The citizens of Germany and Austria, apparently, are convinced of this; they do not think this country gives them a square deal. Some Englishmen are candid enough to admit the same thing. G. Bernard Shaw recently said: "I may, however, remark, that America is not neutral. She is taking a very active part in the war by supplying us with ammunition and weapons and other munitions. Neutrality is nonsense." Quite as emphatic is Norman Angell: "Indeed, if we go below diplomatic fictions to positive realities, America is decisively intervening in the war; she is perhaps settling its issue by throwing the weight of her resources in money, supplies and ammunition on the side of one combatant against the other. The American government has without doubt scrupulously respected all the rules of neutrality. But it would have been equally neutral for America to have decided that her national interests compelled her to exercise her sovereign rights in keeping her resources at home at this juncture and to have treated combatants exactly alike by exporting to neither. This form of neutrality—just as legally defensible in the opinion of many competent American judges as the present one—would perhaps have altered the whole later history of the war. I am not giving you my own opinion, but

that of very responsible independent American authorities, when I say that had American opinion been as hostile to the Allies as on the whole it has been to Germany, the campaign for an embargo on the export of arms or the raising of a loan would have been irresistible. You see I am speaking with undiplomatic freedom; saying out loud what everybody thinks."

The foregoing view, it seems to me, is unquestionably sound. The United States supplies munitions to the Allies not in normal quantities, but to the value of billions of dollars. Our plants are run to their full capacity; extensions are built; whole new factories are erected. War orders dominate for the moment our economic life. And all these supplies go to the enemies of Germany. We cannot expect a German to be much impressed by American preachments on "humanity" and "justice" when his sons have been shot by American bullets. And what galls the native German almost as much, I suspect, as the shipments of arms, which he knows to be technically legal, is the supine attitude of America toward Great Britain. We are not holding the balance even. British violations of neutral rights<sup>1</sup> are, from the standpoint of international law, more reprehensible than Germany's submarine warfare, which was a policy of reprisal. Britain has killed our trade with Germany in noncontraband goods, although not maintaining even the semblance of a blockade of German ports; she has forbidden our trade with even

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<sup>1</sup>See *Economic Aspects of the War* by Edwin J. Clapp, New Haven, 1915.

neutral countries of Europe (while actively trading with those countries herself); she has stopped American vessels and taken off citizens; she has seized the mails of the United States. These arrogant violations of our rights are not merely technical; they are calculated to do the greatest possible amount of harm to the Central Powers; they were initiated frankly for the double purpose of starving Germany's population, and of effecting Germany's economic ruin. Neutrals be hanged; Britannia rules the waves!

What has the United States done to stop these wrongs? Obviously, nothing effective. Each new "blockade" order is more offensive than the last. It is illuminating to contrast the mild and polite protests of this government to England with the sharp, menacing language used to Germany. Whenever we have addressed ourselves to England or France we have said in effect: "My dear fellow, can't you see that you are in the wrong?" Whenever we have addressed ourselves to Germany or Austria we have said in effect: "You contemptible ruffian, quit that instantly!" We have used threats with Germany, persuasion with England. The result is that Germany has granted our demands, while England has grown more arrogant.

The United States, in order to make its neutrality one of fact and not of pretensions, must do one or the other of two things: must place an embargo on the export of arms, or break the British blockade. Perhaps the latter alternative is the more feasible. Unquestionably an embargo on munitions should have

been undertaken at the beginning of the war, for both neutral and humanitarian reasons. But now, a year and a half later, it is possibly too late. Yet this swollen industry and these tremendous shipments of the instruments of death cannot be ignored. They overshadow every other relation of America to the struggle. They constitute us in fact an ally of the Allies. If they may not now be stopped, they lay on us the sternest obligation to make England toe the mark. That can be done; a serious threat of an embargo would help the British lion to see a gleam of reason. And unless we do this we may entirely forfeit the respect and friendship of the Central Powers,—a friendship we can ill afford to lose.

German-Americans, it seems to me, have wasted too much verbal shot and shell on President Wilson. After all Mr. Wilson has kept us out of the fray. It is not hard to think of other prominent Americans who, in his place, would have embroiled us long ago! There are many of us who do not like Mr. Wilson's diplomatic methods; they verge too much on a policy of drift. But we prefer them to bellicose methods. The power of the President, moreover, has its limits. Congress has the authority to place an embargo on the export of arms; the Senate has the final word in foreign relations. German-Americans should work toward two ends, I think,—first, to make our neutrality genuine and impartial, and second and more important, to keep America out of the war. That danger has by no means passed. To accomplish these ends

they should concentrate on American opinion, try to squeeze out of it unfairness, rancor and intolerance. Already they have accomplished something in this direction. The tone of American opinion has improved since the start of the war. But there still remains much ground to be plowed.

III

The people of the United States have escaped the war fever, although persistent attempts are made to arouse them to a fighting mood. Beyond cavil the citizens of this country are bent on peace.

Rudyard Kipling, whose occupation these days is to out-Junker the Junkers, has proposed the pleasant little toast: "Damn all neutrals!" Undoubtedly Mr. Kipling cocked a baleful eye at the United States when he uttered this. We could afford to smile at Mr. Kipling's spleen if he stood alone. But within the last year many militant non-combatants among the Allies have cast baleful glances at the United States. The indifference of America offends them as deeply, apparently, as the hatred of their enemy. Why, they ask with a gesture of impatience, should Americans stand aside in this crisis of a civilization? Why should they allow others to fight their battle for them—the battle of liberty and democracy? And these critics of ours in England and France are none too delicate in attributing motives for this Yankee apathy toward their noble cause. They insinuate we are too busy making dollars out of others' distress to heed the call

of the spirit, and they frankly hint that when we say we are too proud to fight we mean too cowardly.

A number of Britons have recently unburdened themselves on this subject of American neutrality.<sup>2</sup> Let me quote a few of the choicer passages:

“We fight not merely for our threatened selves; we fight for the liberty and peace of the whole world. We fight, and you Americans know we fight, for you. War is a tragic and terrible business, and those who will not face the blood and dust of it must be content to play only the most secondary of parts in the day of reckoning.

H. G. WELLS.”

“On the last question, however,—the future of America in face of a German triumph—I can speak, if not with authority, at least with certainty. There is simply no doubt in the world that a German power founded on the breaking of France and England would have ultimately to break America, too, before its work was secure. A rich and disdainful democracy across the Atlantic is something which the German Empire simply could not afford to tolerate. If Germany gets as far as that, it would be vain to discuss whether America should fight, because America certainly will; and in that fight, please God, she would have Burgoyne beside her as well as Lafayette.

G. K. CHESTERTON.”

“The British nation would certainly be much gratified if their kinsmen, the Americans, should take a

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<sup>2</sup>*Everybody's Magazine*, January, 1916.

hand in suppressing the 'mad bull of Europe.' England would certainly be greatly benefited if America should go to war with Germany. Sir Roper Parkinson, M. P., in a recent speech, said: 'If the Americans should join the Allies, the war would soon be ended.'

SIR HIRAM MAXIM."

"Personally, I have always held that America would come to England's assistance if ever England was hard pressed. Great Britain as yet is not, thank God, in a hole. Still, it has puzzled me not a little during the past year to assign a good cause for America remaining neutral in this awful contest. Is not America, just as much as Great Britain, a lover of justice and a hater of such atrocities as those which have characterized the warfare of the Huns? And as a friend she can no longer stand aloof and see civilization, and all that great nations are bound to uphold and hold dear, crushed and trampled under foot by barbarism and 'frightfulness.' I am quite convinced that it is the unanimous opinion throughout Great Britain that America should join the Allies, and it is undoubtedly a fixed hope in this country that she will assuredly do so before many months have passed.

GENERAL GARNET WOLSELEY."

These gentlemen take their malice and themselves very seriously. But they have, as it seems to me, totally misjudged the trend of American opinion since the outbreak of hostilities. They do not see that Americans—outside of the Anglomaniacs, found

chiefly along the Atlantic seaboard—passionately desire peace because they have come to believe that peace serves not only the best interests of themselves but of civilization itself. The Middle West, the West, and the South, do not want war, will not have war. Even in the hypnotized East there is a great sober element which would regard a plunge into this welter of slaughter as the worst possible calamity to the Republic. Only the pro-Ally fanatics (who are the most dangerous hyphenates we harbor, as I shall attempt to point out in a moment) want war and work for war.

Americans, in other words, have traveled far from that naive partisanship for the Allies which characterized them eighteen months ago. What has wrought this change in sentiment? Chiefly the growth of a healthy cynicism. I am speaking now of the bulk of Americans, who lie in opinion between the red-hot pro-Germans on the one extreme and the red-hot pro-Ally sympathizers on the other extreme. This great sane mass of the nation has disallowed the high-sounding declarations, the grandiose pretentions, of either side. It has come to some very definite conclusions; it believes that this war was willed by governments, not by peoples; that it sprang directly from a system of diplomatic groups and military alliances, each of which was trying constantly to tilt or upset the balance of power in its own favor; that the only significant rivalries behind the mutual hostilities were imperialistic rivalries; that the real stakes in this war are colonies, trade pre-emptions, strategic ports and



straits, and above all, military prestige; that militarism may be indicated by a predominant navy as well as by a great army, and that its essence is neither, but an itch for power and a muddle of selfish national ambitions; that militarism is not exclusively or even principally a Prussian disease, but a European, indeed, a world disease; that despite all the fine phrases about freedom, justice and democracy, the real danger to civilization lies in the war itself and in its spread: that a war of imperialistic rivalries enlists the support of great populations by cant and by lies about the enemy; and that as the struggle grows in bitterness and in extent of bereavement, both sides—but especially the losing side—become fanatic in hatred of the foe.

In brief, Americans refuse to be impressed longer by sham and pose. They are inclined to agree with Francis Delaisi, who predicted in 1911 that the business magnates and the politicians were about to plunge Europe into an imperialistic struggle.<sup>3</sup> They are inclined to agree with Bernard Shaw, who asserted early in the conflict: "All attempts to represent this war as anything higher or more significant philosophically or politically or religiously for our Junkers and our Tommies than a quite primitive contest of the pugnacity that bullies and the pugnacity that will not be bullied are foredoomed to the derision of history." Bryan voiced American sentiment when he called it a "causeless war." Of course the phrase is inaccurate;

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<sup>3</sup>*The Inevitable War (La guerre qui vient)*, by Francis Delaisi. Paris, 1911; Boston, 1915.

there were causes enough, such as they were. Rather it should be called a witless war.

Another reason why most Americans cannot share the views of the solemn Englishmen above quoted is that Americans have not given way to hatred of Germans. We regard them as human beings much like other men and women, not as "Huns," "savages" and "beasts." The American does not have the Briton's naive belief in German atrocities. He knows that many of these tales (such as that of the Belgian child with severed hands) have been disproved a hundred times. He hears quite as frightful reports of Russian atrocities and of French outrages. He understands that war is a gruesome business and that it brings out some of the basest traits in human nature; but he is unwilling to heap all the abuse due to human nature at its worst on Teutonic nature. Not only does the American show a wholesome skepticism toward the atrocity yarns paraded by the Allied governments; he goes further; he feels a revulsion of disgust. He wonders why men who are gentlemen attack the reputations as well as the soldiers of their foes, and keep up a campaign of calumny which they know in part at least to be false, a campaign at once malicious and mendacious.

Still another reason why the American feels kindlier toward Germany is that he has a high respect for German civilization, in times of peace at any rate. The British upper classes seem always to have regarded Germans with the contempt that the estab-

lished feel toward the *nouveau riche*. They are unappreciative of German poetry, art and literature; they speak of boors and canaille; they appear to have gathered their estimate of the German nation by watching a fat Berliner eat sauerkraut in a beer-garden. The American on the other hand gives German civilization its due, even though he be one who deplores its "militarism." He knows that German music and German science lead the world; he admires the Germans for their educational system, for their municipalities, for their social insurance. Englishmen have often commented on the paucity of learning in America, and compared our culture unfavorably with their own; and perhaps in general the boast is justified. But in their ignorance of the real Germany and of German cultural attainments the English upper classes have shown themselves to be precisely what Matthew Arnold called them—"barbarians."

Our British critics should remember that Americans are fully competent to judge for themselves what the effect of a German victory would be on the United States. We are not affrighted over hypothetical German schemes. We know perfectly well that a German victory would not lead to the "enslavement" of either England or of France, and we are not worried about the fate of Suez or of India. We do not forget, again, that a German defeat means not only the triumph of British imperialism, but the triumph of Russia and Japan. We would rather see the Balkan peoples, or the races of the Near East, Prussianized than Russian-

ized. And most vividly of all, Americans realize that the trend of world politics after the war is a matter of sheer speculation. It is all guesswork; no one knows. The dread designs which the British attribute to the German government are deduced from enmity and malice, not from reason or clearheaded calculation. America's answer to all this alarmist talk is military and naval preparedness; we shall be ready to meet aggression, from whatever quarter! So far as South America is concerned, Englishmen would do well to ponder a bit the pregnant remark of Israel Zangwill: "But the Monroe Doctrine would lose its last vestige of meaning if America intervened in a European war."

The American people have come to the conclusion that peace is their duty. This is not from fear, greed or sluggishness. We are not ultra-pacifists in this country; we do not want peace at any price, especially at the price of honor. But that is just the point: we are not convinced that any great moral principle, or even any fundamental issue of nationality, is at stake in this conflict. As the strife in Europe grows more desperate, as the non-combatant populations show a more revengeful and hateful temper, the war seems more and more remote (except to the Anglomaniacs) from American interests. After all, why should America feed her sons to this carnage by the thousands, or the hundreds of thousands? Why should boys from the farms of Ohio, Kansas and Texas die to help France take Alsace-Lorraine, or the Romanoffs to vic-

timize more peoples? What have we to gain by becoming, for the first time in our history, entangled in murderous European rivalries? Why should we abandon our one opportunity of service, that, as President Wilson has expressed it, of keeping the "processes of peace alive, if only to prevent collective economic ruin"?

At the start the mass of Americans felt both an intense loyalty to the cause of the Allies, and a gripping horror at the catastrophe to Europe. Both of these feelings have to some extent weakened. The intellectual classes are not now so much concerned over the military outcome as over the prospective terms of settlement. They hope that both sides will act with a measure of magnanimity and restraint which will give some basis for a permanent peace. By the common man, by the man in the street, the war is now regarded with indifference, indeed, with boredom. Our vast American irreverence has asserted itself, even in the face of the most awful battle of history. In many places "war talk" is tabooed, considered bad form. The majority of Americans, probably, still hope to see the Allies win; but their interest is sentimental rather than vital. It is not the breathless solicitude of one who watches his champion do battle to save him; it is rather the enthusiasm of the baseball "fan" who cheers for the home team. At the beginning of the war the favorite American quip was: "I'm neutral; I don't care who beats Germany." At present Americans are so neutral they are reconciled

to the prospect of seeing Germany win, if she can muster the strength. This growth of indifference may gall Englishmen, Frenchmen and American Tories. But it is, I submit, a patent fact.

## IV

There is a conspicuous element in America which has persistently refused to see this war through American eyes. When these persons look at contemporary history they look at it from the point of view of Englishmen and Frenchmen; when they urge action they urge it in the interest of the European coalition to which England and France belong. They are our pro-Ally fanatics, our Anglomaniacs, our American Tories. By whatever name they may be called, they have one distinguishing mark: they make mock of our neutrality.

August 18, 1914, before the war was a month old, President Wilson issued an appeal for restraint in discussing the conflict. The President said in part:

“The effect of the war upon the United States will depend upon what American citizens say or do. Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned.

“The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war. It is natural and inevitable that there should be the utmost variety of sympathy and desire among them

with regard to the issues and circumstances of the conflict. Some will wish one nation, others another, to succeed in this momentous struggle. It will be easy to excite passion and difficult to allay it. Those responsible for exciting it will assume a heavy responsibility.

"I venture, therefore, my countrymen, to speak a solemn word of warning against that deepest, most subtle, most essential breach of neutrality which may spring out of partisanship, out of passionately taking sides.

"I am speaking, I feel sure, the earnest wish and purpose of every thoughtful American that this great country of ours, which is, of course, the first in our thoughts and hearts, should show herself in this tone of peculiar trial a nation fit beyond others to exhibit the fine poise of undisturbed judgment, the dignity of self-control, the efficiency of dispassionate action, a nation which neither sits in judgment upon others nor is disturbed in her own counsels and which keeps herself fit and free to do what is honest and disinterested and truly serviceable for the peace of the world."

From the beginning pro-Ally sympathizers have spit upon the President's words. They have passionately taken sides. They have put no bridle on their tongues; they have poured out the vilest vituperation on Germany. With asinine self-complacency they have "sat in judgment" on the nations at war, and delivered the "American verdict." Although finding themselves largely in control of the press, they have

never tried to speak impartially, never attempted to allay passion. On the contrary, they have done their embittered best to lash America to intolerance and hysteria.

Since the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* this unneutral element has tried to rush us into war over our "rights." And this despite the fact that there never has been the slightest excuse for going to war over that issue. On the whole, neither side has offered us direct offense. We have simply been caught between the firing lines. It is impossible to vindicate neutral rights by fighting one side, for both sides have infringed those rights. Should we war on Germany we should fight by the side of allies whose interpretation of sea law is no more acceptable to us than that of our foes. Indeed, a sea monopolized and fortified by Great Britain may in the end prove more disturbing to us than the submarine indiscretions of Germany and Austria.

Of course pro-Ally sympathizers insist that Germany's invasion of neutral rights have cost American lives, whereas England's violations result in merely commercial and economic damage. The distinction is hypocritical. The persons who work themselves into a rage over Germany's "slaughter of innocent women and children" are not in the least annoyed because German babies are going to die for lack of milk. England's violations of our rights have been less spectacular than Germany's; but they are far more insolent. And it is well to remember that the Fathers fought the Revolution over a stamp-tax. The present



administration has vindicated the right of Americans to sail through war zones on ships of belligerent nations (although in Mexico it warned Americans to leave or remain at their own risk). But it has not vindicated the right of Americans to use the high seas for legitimate commerce. Senator Gore summed up the matter in a sentence: "It is quite as important to protect the right of Americans to ship innocent goods as it is to protect their right to risk involving this country in a carnival of slaughter."

The submarine controversy has dragged itself out month after month. At each halt in the negotiations our traitorous Anglomaniacs have rejoiced. They have implored the President to stickle for every little point of international law. They have insisted on a policy designed, not to vindicate our rights, but to sever relations. They are insatiate; no concession satisfies them. Germany declares that she has no intention of molesting neutral ships and neutral commerce; then she yields unconditionally to the demand that unarmed merchantmen, under hostile flag, must not be torpedoed without warning and without adequate provision for the safety of passengers and crew. Does this impairment of the submarine weapon placate the Anglomaniacs? Not at all; they now insist that Germany and Austria must forbear to treat *armed* merchantmen as auxiliary cruisers. It is not enough that Americans may travel safely on American, Dutch and Scandinavian ships; not enough that they may travel without fear on unarmed British, French, Italian and Japanese

ships. They must also be granted the right to travel without danger on belligerent vessels carrying armament hypocritically called "defensive." Sensible Americans, in and out of Congress, rightly urge that American citizens be warned to stay off armed belligerent vessels. But our frenzied Tories scream that American honor is at stake. Honor? Great Britain during the Russo-Japanese war, and Sweden during the present war, warned their citizens not to travel on armed belligerent ships save at their own risk. Did England and Sweden thereby lose their national honor? In her attitude toward so-called defensive armament, Germany has the equity on her side, whatever the letter of the law may be. This is a trifling "right" for us to cherish; and to endanger our peace for it would be childish. Its defense can seem important only to those whose minds hold a hinterland of anti-German hate.

In the name of honesty, what more can these American Tories demand of the United States? Has our neutrality been interpreted in any way which has given aid or succor to the Teutonic Powers? Have we not by our huge shipments of arms virtually constituted ourselves an ally of the Entente? The unvarnished truth is this: the pro-Ally fanatics in this country are not thinking of American interests at all; they are thinking of British and French interests. They ask us to intervene in a European struggle because of their opinion of the European right and wrong of it. They want us to go to war despite the fact that our

youth would be killed and our wealth destroyed in a quarrel which is no concern of the American people. They demand war notwithstanding that it would imperil our international relations for a century. They urge us to fight, knowing full well that in our opinions we are a divided people, and that war would blast our national unity and run a cleavage of rancor and hatred through our cosmopolitan population.

These Anglomaniacs usually disguise their intentions in a fog of fine words. Sometimes they are more candid. In New York City there is an organization denominating itself The American Rights Committee. This committee has issued a statement which reads:

“Seventeen months of the European war have passed. During this period events of profound significance have occurred and issues formerly obscure have become clearly defined. The brutal violation of Belgian neutrality has been followed by the bombardment of unfortified places, the deliberate killing of non-combatants, the murder of women and children on land and sea, the wholesale massacre of the Armenian people, the disclosure of gigantic purposes of world-conquest, and a general defense of these unspeakable deeds by the Teutonic peoples.

“Our eyes have been opened to facts which were not fully revealed when we adopted a policy of neutrality, and the situation which confronts us today is not that which confronted us in August, 1914. Then we were admonished to remain neutral toward the European crisis: today we are involved in a world-

crisis. Then we followed the traditional American policy of non-interference in European political struggles: today we are called upon to champion the immutable and universal rights of man. Then we tried to maintain neutrality of thought as well as of word and deed: today the Teutonic Allies have forced upon us issues which render neutrality not merely impossible but utterly repugnant to the moral conscience of the nation. Through our fuller knowledge of the events which precipitated the war, of the manner in which it has been prosecuted by the Teutonic Allies, and of the enormous schemes for Teutonic aggrandizement, we have come to understand that a theory and method of government which we abhor is being forced upon the world by military might, and that all those human liberties which our nation was founded to maintain are today imperiled by the possibility of a Teutonic triumph."

This bombast is followed by a "declaration of principles":

"1. We believe that there is a morality of nations which requires every government to observe its treaty-obligations and to order its conduct with a decent respect to the opinions of mankind.

"2. We believe that the Teutonic Powers have repudiated the obligations of civilized nations and have raised issues which lift the present struggle from the sphere of European political disputes to a crisis involving all humanity.

"3. We believe that in the face of such a world-

crisis our people cannot remain neutral and our government should not remain silent.

"4. We condemn the aims of the Teutonic Powers, and we denounce as barbarous their methods of warfare.

"5. We believe that the Entente Allies are engaged in a struggle to prevent the domination of the world by armed force and are striving to guarantee to the smallest nation its rights to an independent and peaceful existence.

"6. We believe that the progress of civilization and the free development of the principles of democratic government depend upon the success of the Entente Allies.

"7. We believe that our duty to humanity and respect for our national honor demand that our government take appropriate action to place the nation on record as deeply in sympathy with the efforts of the Entente Allies to remove the menace of Prussian militarism."

It would be a waste of time to refute these statements. They obviously are inspired by prejudice and ill-will; they obviously treat the crassest assumptions as matters of fact; they obviously reveal a sophomoric conception of international politics. Nevertheless these agitators and their ilk constitute a menace to the peace and security of the United States. Preposterous as their utterances are, they foster malevolence, for in times of passion declamation passes for reason. These Anglomaniacs are turning their backs on America;

## GERMANY MISJUDGED

they have their eyes fastened on England, Belgium and France. They do not heed American opinion; they listen to the advice of Englishmen. They are our true hyphenates. They are the real traitors within our borders. They are the unloyal element that has introduced "corrupt distempers" into our national life.

For these American Tories there is only one adequate piece of advice: Let them get out! Let them enlist and take their places in the English trenches. Let them remember that the seas are open to them; Britannia rules the waves! Their hearts are in France and England; they are free to prove their sincerity by risking their lives there. We do not want them in America, fighting the war with their mouths, seeking to embroil the whole nation. I am aware that this advice cannot be followed by many of our most violent pro-Ally fanatics, because they are past military age. It is a remarkable fact that our bitterest defamers of Germany are old men. I shall not be invidious enough to mention names; but just recall to mind the leading American Tories! There is no more shameful spectacle in America than these malignant old men, waving their fists at the Kaiser, mouthing the garbage thrown to them from Fleet Street, hounding us on, shrilling for a sacrifice of American blood.

### v

Most thinking men and women agree that this is a time for America to keep her head and watch her step. Should the Teutonic armies continue their victories,

and approach to a triumph, the efforts of hyphenated Anglo- and Franco-Americans to involve us will become more frantic. But that collective insanity we shall probably avoid, despite their fomentations. We shall do the world the negative service of standing aloof. But it seems doubtful that America will be able to accomplish anything positive for world peace, anything constructive for the future security of mankind.

And the reason?

Simply this: that bigotry cannot reform bigots; that prejudice and hatred and intolerance cannot heal a world gone mad with hatred and intolerance. America cannot effectively fight militarism so long as she thinks injustice to Germany. And let there be no mistake about that: American opinion is monstrously unjust. It is as unjust to Germany now as was British opinion to the North during our Civil War. America cannot suggest sensible remedies for war so long as she holds to the childish notion that the blood-guilt of this greatest of all wars is a personal guilt of the German military caste or of the German people.

Fundamentally, of course, none of the great governments at war is blameless. We do not have here white angels fighting black fiends, but human beings all smeared with the same scarlet. The only question open to debate is, who is smeared the less? This question finds its answer in the recent politics of Europe, the history, say, of the ten years preceding the war. To me it seems that any philosophical examination of

this recent history gives Germany a *shade* of advantage, a slightly superior claim on our moral sympathy, both for the character of her aims, and her honesty in avowing them.

American comment on the war appears either to have overshot the mark, or undershot it. It has been either too naive or too subtle. First of all, Americans made up their minds that Germany commenced the war; that she was the "disturber of the world's peace." It was a snap judgment, for it was based almost exclusively upon the events of the twelve days of the crisis. The diplomatic documents of the European governments were said to embody the "evidence in the case." Never was evidence flimsier. The different governments wrote, selected and printed what they wanted the world to read. The dispatches are all scissors and paste, and sometimes not even that, but plain fabrication, as in the instance of the notorious No. 2 in the French Yellow Book. The worthlessness of such "evidence" for unbiased judgment is shown by the fact that men come to exactly opposite conclusions in reading it. Judgment depends not on what the dispatches say, but on which of them one believes true, and which one rejects as false. From a thorough perusal of the White, Yellow, Orange, Gray, Blue, Red and Green Books, every person emerges with precisely that mental colorblindness with which he started.

Americans condemned Germany at the beginning mainly from newspaper accounts of the crisis. That snap judgment has never been revised. The scholarly



portion of American opinion has busied itself chiefly in explaining what it assumed to be true. It has started from the premise that the Teutons precipitated a world war, and were bitten with militarism. So it has attempted to give reasons for that militarism. It has sought to trace the influence of Nietzsche and Treitschke on the Teutonic consciousness; it has attempted to derive German psychology from Kant; it has made elaborate and academic contrasts between the Latin and Teutonic civilizations,—and so on through fine-spun dialectics. All of this discussion is but window-dressing for a theory and a prejudice.

Some thoughtful Americans, who see the war as a logical result of the silent, alert struggle in Europe between rival alliances for a balance of power, covering many years, state a conclusion unfavorable to Germany in restrained language. They would agree with Prof. Ellery C. Stowell: "I do not wish to be understood as thinking that Germany really wished for war; but by her conduct she gave evidence that she intended to back up her ally to secure a diplomatic triumph and the subjugation of her neighbor, which would have greatly strengthened Teutonic influence in the Balkans. She risked the peace of Europe in a campaign after prestige." With such moderation it is hard to quarrel. But most pro-Ally Americans are not content to maintain that Germany was sixty per cent wrong in the diplomacy directly preceding the war; they assert she was ninety-eight per cent wrong, or one hundred per cent wrong. According to these

uncompromising partisans she plotted a war, conspired for it, deliberately provoked it.

To support the charge of conspiracy the pro-Ally fanatics surely cite the well-known facts. They undoubtedly point out that at the end of July, 1914, Germany had not recalled her reserves from any part of the world, that the Kaiser was yachting in the North Sea, that the harvests were not in, that the German fleet was scattered in small units on all the oceans. To demonstrate that the Entente Allies were innocently ignorant of the impending crash they probably call attention to the mobilization measures taken in Russia as early as June, to the timely review of the English fleet in the early summer, to the transportation of colonial troops to France several weeks before the ultimatums. They unquestionably go further. They show that England was unprepared for the conflict because she had been maintaining the two-power naval standard; France because she practised conscription and had recently passed the Three Year Law; Russia because the number of her armies and reserves was equal to those of Germany and Austria combined. Germany, they say, has been pursuing for a long time a selfish imperialistic policy; she has been seeking colonies and trying to guarantee markets for her export products. But the Allies on the other hand have pursued a relatively altruistic policy; they have stood for the *status quo*; they guard the rights of small nations. This disinterestedness of the Allies is demonstrated by their acquiring, previous to war,

several times as much territory as Germany; by their treatment of Morocco, Finland and Persia; by their penetrations of Arabia and China. All of these arguments lead up to the conclusion that Germany is the one militaristic nation, and that her ambitions plunged a guileless world in strife. Exactly what we started out to prove!

But after all the warm partisan of the Allies does not reason about causes,—he feels. His emotions are dominant. Having determined that Germany is to blame for the war, he judges every subsequent issue unfairly. Atrocity tales from the Entente side stir his anger, whereas atrocity tales from the German side, even when better bolstered by proof, fail to move his imagination. He would demand that the United States protest the violation of Belgium's neutrality; but he would consider it silly to protest the violation of Greece's neutrality. It should be apparent to every thinking man that the Belgian affair must of necessity seem more reprehensible to the pro-Ally sympathizer than to the sympathizer with the Teutonic Powers. The latter cannot help but feel that Germany's extreme peril justified the passage of troops across neutral territory, and that Belgium, by her secret agreements with France and England, by her French sympathies, and by the fact and character of her resistance, constituted herself virtually one of the Allies. Whether this view is right or wrong, the fact remains that had the United States protested the invasion of Belgium she would not have been acting merely in the interests

of international law; she would have been "sitting in judgment" on the war, she would have been taking sides. In any event it is not the business of the United States, where American rights are not invaded, to play the part of international Pharisee and send out protests every time any one does anything we deem "lawless" or "unrighteous." If we adopted that policy we should be shooting out protests every week. What tribunal appointed us the judge of nations and their acts?

This is a time pre-eminently for charity, forbearance, friendliness to all. It is not a time for imputing bad motives, for recriminations. The war is the logical result of imperialism, of rival military alliances, of the doctrine of the balance of power. The dominant cliques of Europe thought a war inevitable. It has for decades been the business of these cliques to plot, not for war, not for peace, but for *successful* war. Possibly both sides thought the hour had struck in 1914, the Germans for strategic reasons, the Entente for political reasons. Unquestionably the statesmen of the Entente believed at the beginning they would soon crush Germany and Austria, that the 300,000,000 would soon overwhelm the 130,000,000. Their coalition once set in motion, they predicted a short victorious war. In this they simply misjudged, they underestimated Germany's strength and resources. I cannot believe there was much sinister calculation for the precise event on either side, except possibly by the autocracy and military caste of Russia. On the whole,

Europe simply tumbled into war. The nations had erected rivalries and enmities which could not stand the strain of a real crisis.

If America wishes to accomplish aught for peace within the next year, the next decade or next quarter century, it must face the real situation. It must grapple, intellectually, with an evil system, with an international problem. Surely Europe is not training itself to solve the problem. So far as causes are concerned, this war was not a people's war. But today it has become precisely that. Hate has eaten into the vitals of every nation. To each people the wickedness of their foe seems the one great curse upon mankind. Blood-lust and revenge are re-enforced by moral purposes. The spirit of the Inquisition is being revived. It hardly seemed possible; but one can see the re-creation of that hell of human motives in England and France—the idea of saving the soul by torturing the body,—of redeeming a nation by killing its citizens. Possibly Europe will recover from that insanity. Certainly America cannot help Europe by capitulating to the same madness. Only by the exercise of dispassionate judgment and an infinite compassion can we offer the world a new horizon and a hope.

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